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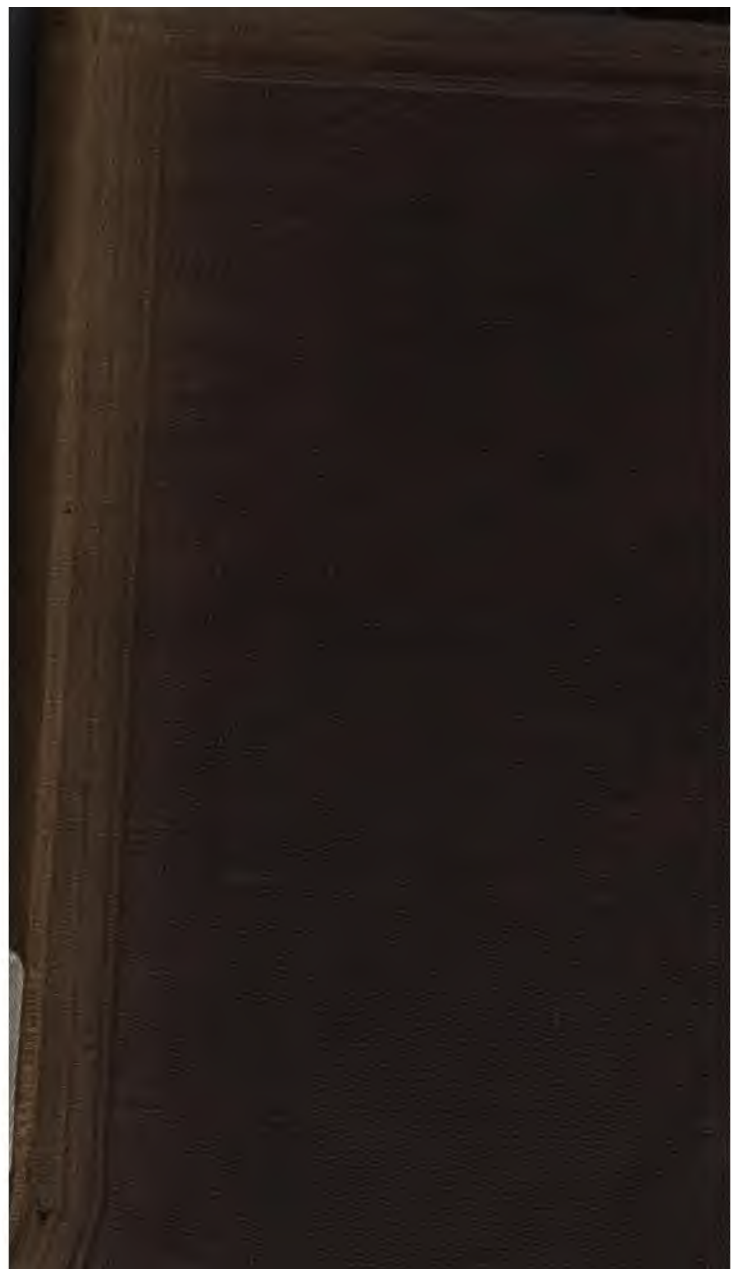
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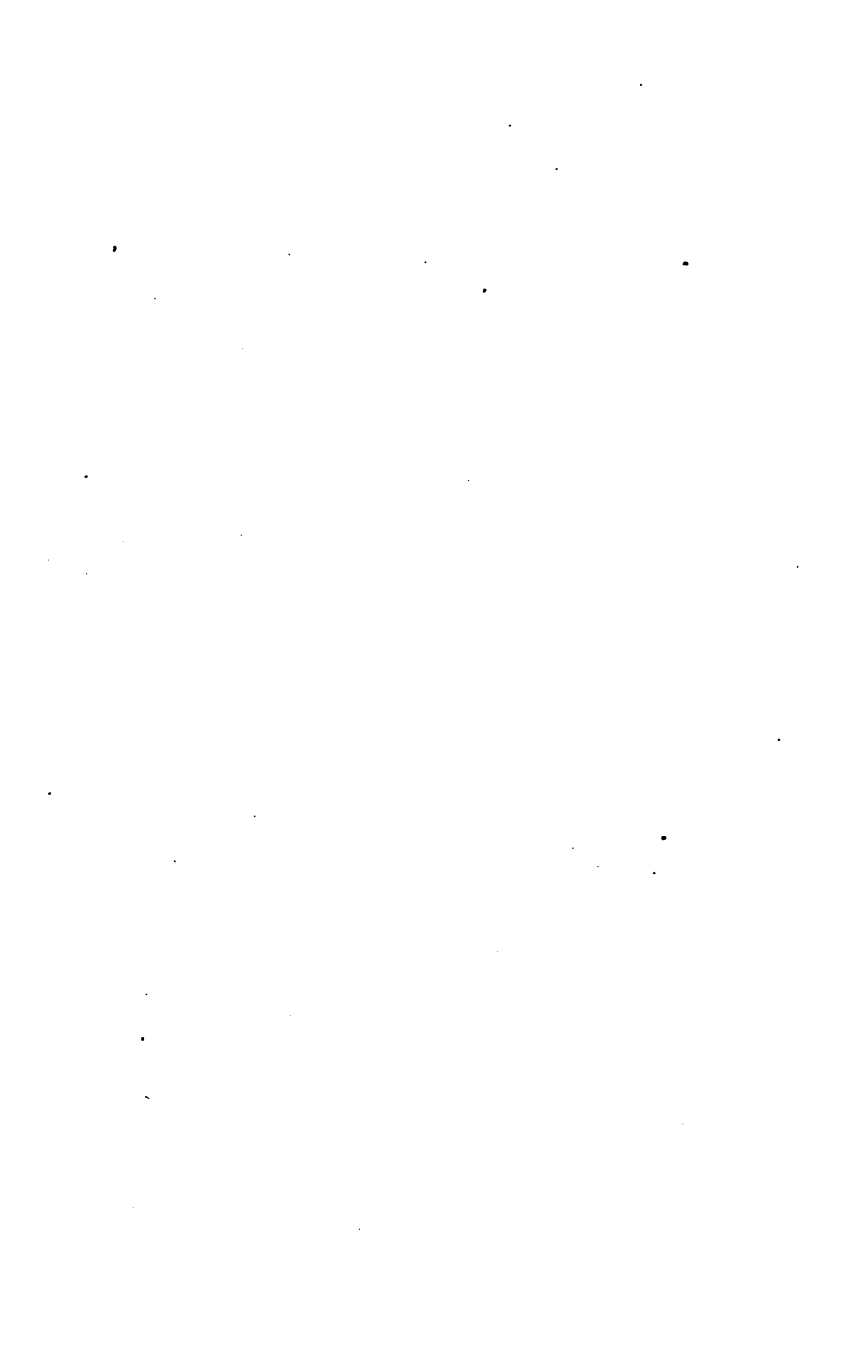




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# STEPS IN THE PATHWAY

FROM

## YOUTH TO HEAVEN.

BY

*written by Samuel*  
REV. F. S. BLISS.

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"Hail ! new-waked atom of the Eternal whole,  
Young voyager upon Time's mighty river !  
Hail to thee, Human Soul !  
Hail, and forever !  
Young habitant of earth,  
Fair as its flowers,  
Thou art akin to God who fashioned thee."

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MONTPELIER:

ELI BALLOU, BOOK & JOB PRINTER.

1868.





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Affectionately Dedicated

To those we love and labor for,

The young of our land.



## P R E F A C E .

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**T**HE Author of these pages, during a ministry of fifteen years, has preached many sermons to the young. He has ever aimed to elevate their views of life, to establish in their minds principles of morality and religion, and to inspire their hearts with Love to God and Man.

On reviewing this department of his labors, he is not conscious of having taught them what he now regards as false or hurtful. But maturer thought, with a larger experience and observation, has made him desirous of readjusting and presenting in a new form his previous instructions. Some of them he would modify, by omitting some thoughts, and placing in a subordinate relation others, he once deemed important; while in many instances he would introduce considerations he now regards as vital, but which were formerly overlooked, or but slightly noticed.

The following chapters, therefore, may be considered as comprising the substance of what he has said

to the young, at different times,—rewritten with such modifications as his present convictions suggest. He believes they treat of what is of vital importance to them. He, therefore, sends them forth, hoping and praying that with the blessing of God, they may benefit those for whom they have been prepared.

Should any errors be detected in the typographical production of the work, we ask the indulgence of our readers,—for the printer's sake.

F. S. B.

## **C O N T E N T S.**

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- I. PURITY.**
- II. THOUGHTFULNESS.**
- III. HUMILITY.**
- IV. EARNESTNESS.**
- V. LOVE.**
- VI. RELIGION.**
- VII. HEAVEN.**



# I.

## PURITY.

**I**N the preparation of a landscape or ornamental garden, the first work is to clear the ground of all useless materials. The stones and other hard substances must be gathered out. The seeds and roots of wild and noxious plants must be destroyed. The earth must be made rich, soft and smooth. It must be prepared for the impressions we would make upon it. Every element that will prevent or retard the growth of our fruits and flowers must be extracted. And the earth must be fitted to receive such new elements as will quicken and develop its vitality.

In youth, human life is like the uncultivated soil. The diligent and tasteful hand can make it a beautiful garden of knowledge,



virtue and happiness ; or it may be left, a use less waste, to become root-bound and overgrown with weeds. It contains the elements of an infinite growth, but they must be quickened into life, developed, directed and moulded. In the endowments of their own being, and in the gifts of nature, providence and grace, the young have the materials provided for them, from which they must carve out their own characters. And every day they add something to the work. Innumerable exertions of thought and will shape the features of the soul. Habits of love, piety and truth ; or habits of falsehood, passion and revenge silently mould and fashion it, till at length, it unfolds the image of God in which it was created, or buries that image beneath a gross, earthly life.

The sculptor slowly fashions a human countenance from the rough, unshapen stone. It does not appear in response to the first blow of the chisel. Its life-like features are not shapen at once. It must be wrought out patiently by a thousand strokes. Count-

less chisel points must round, polish and perfect the lineaments; put in the fine touches and bring out the expression. Human character is thus formed by long discipline and faithful culture. It must be wrought upon, unfolded, enlightened and sanctified. It must be nourished, strengthened and expanded by all the intellectual, moral and spiritual elements God has provided to sustain its life.

But if perfection of character is dependent on these conditions, it is important for the young to consider what is the needful preparation for beginning this growth and development of true life. The landscape or garden cannot be laid out until the ground is fitted for it. What is the first step to be taken to set life in motion heavenward? Into what state or condition of mind and heart should the young be brought preparatory to the reception of those influences which feed the soul, and nourish a divine and heavenly life?

It is evident that the intellectual and moral condition may be such as to unfit them to

receive the impressions of wisdom and virtue. As the soil, filled with stones and the roots and seeds of useless plants, cannot be laid out into the beautiful garden, filled with choice fruits and flowers, so the mind filled with gross passions, lusts and desires, under the control of unrighteous principles and aims, cannot bear the fruits of wisdom and virtue. If you inquire then, young friends, What is the first indispensable preparation for a life of progress in intellectual, moral and spiritual attainments? we answer in the words of an inspired apostle, "Keep thyself pure." "Cleanse yourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit." Cast out of your minds all low, vile and degrading principles and purposes. Emancipate your outward lives from the tyranny of debasing habits. Remember that purity of character,—purity in thought, word and deed, is the one, indispensable condition of improvement.

Few young people duly consider how much purity of thought and feeling do to quicken all the faculties and powers of their

being. Our systems of education do not give due weight to the favorable influence of moral culture upon intellectual development. We do not realize how much freer and stronger the mind will act; how much clearer it will see, when the heart is pure, the dispositions sweet and the purposes right. Indeed, we cannot fully comprehend this, but by contrasting it with the blinding, deadening influences of impurity. When the faculties become the slaves of gross and debasing passions they are not free to think of what instructs and elevates them. If they are filled with the images of lust, they cannot perceive the delicate features of purity. If they are most absorbed in those things that gratify the earthly appetites, they can think but little of those that minister to the higher life. When the virus of lust and passion corrodes the thoughts, desires and purposes, when they chiefly tend towards wealth or pleasure or distinction, or any other earthly attainment, they cannot, in the nature of things, duly appreciate what is higher than

earthly objects. Their spiritual vision being dimmed, they cannot perceive spiritual things. This is the thought of the Apostle when he says, "The natural man,"—the unregenerate, earthly man,—“receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned.”

The mind cannot love opposite qualities with equal affection at the same time. It will always love most, what is most in harmony with its own tastes;—what corresponds with its culture, habits and desires. When we look abroad into society, we see an overwhelming tendency towards material things,—towards those pursuits and pleasures that thrive on earthly objects. It is because the minds of men are gross and sordid. They are permeated with coarse dispositions and desires that are attracted by these objects and pursuits. The only check to this tendency is the regeneration of the heart by that “wisdom which is from above, first pure and then peaceable.” The princi-

ple of supreme love to God and his law, holy affections and enlightened convictions can alone dispel the fascination of the world. This truth is recognized by the Apostle when he writes those searching words, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." The love of the one, drives the love of the other out of the heart. "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."

We emphasize these inspired declarations because they penetrate to the heart of our theme. They distinctly mark the truth "that it is from within, out of the heart,"—from its affections, tastes and principles,—that the outward life takes its direction. Observe what a person really admires and loves; what fills him with the warmest enthusiasm; what quickens him with the most earnest aspiration, and you will know his true character. This determines his precise place in the scale of intellectual and spiritual advancement. This allies him to earth or

heaven. This makes him the friend or the enemy of God. The works in which he engages with the heartiest relish, the sentiments that most thoroughly arouse him, the occasions that call him out, "the moments of his brightening eye and genial laugh and flowing voice," — these are an unmistakable indication of his tastes and deepest life ; of the extent and character of his culture ; — of the real temper and quality of his mind. And especially are the traits of men's inward life revealed by the *persons* who most please them ; in whose society they delight ; whom they strive to imitate, and to whose position, manners and influence they aspire. We may usually determine the qualities of the invisible man by these motions of the outward life. And, judged by them, how many are there, young and old, surrendered to a low, impure life ; who know no higher aim than to be comfortable, or rich, or renowned, or beautiful, — who think more of what they *have* than of what they *are*.

These thoughts are illustrated by the preferences and habits of the young. There are young people whose highest ambition seems fully satisfied in a fine outward appearance ; in splendid dress, or residence, or carriage, or in whatever adorns their sphere in life. Others there are, who apparently care little for these things. They can sit down in almost any surroundings and lose themselves, for hours, in the pages of history, or philosophy, or religion. There are young men and women who appear to be in their element, to realize their highest idea of happiness when listening to an Artemus Ward ; or at a concert of low and vulgar songs, or engaged in some childish play, or reading some exciting story. There are other young people to whom these amusements are disgusting. They will not remain where they are if they can escape from them. They do not pause to reason out the impropriety of such recreations, but they *feel* their impropriety. The culture, sentiments and tastes within them, the spirit and tone of their life,



are repulsed by them. We have seen too many young men who deem it an evidence of smartness to utter the ringing oath,—pass round the intoxicating cup, and puff the filthy cigar. And we have also seen too many young women who look with complacency, if not with admiration, upon these habits of their gentleman associates. They fall into their company most readily, laugh at their indulgences, and even give their love and their lives into their custody. But we know others to whom the presence of such characters and habits is an insufferable offence. They realize that the breath of such lips and the touch of such hands are contamination, and every fibre of their being recoils from them as from serpents. Not with feelings of contempt or disdain do they shun them; not because they despise or hate them, or would not do them good, but there is that in the spirit and temper of their characters which is repulsive and separates them. There is “an irrepressible conflict” between purity and impurity.

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This difference in the tastes and preferences of young people is not always the difference between innocence and criminality. It often results from education or the want of education,—from social influences and home training. But it is always the index of the purity or the impurity of the mind, whether it has been wrought by our own agency, or by parental or social influences. It always shows the inward habit of thinking and feeling,—the tenor and spirit of the mind. And it is easy to decide in which state it has the freest and highest action. Given to trivial, sordid indulgences it moves in a narrow circle; its powers are paralyzed; its vision dimmed; its forces wasted. The whole life with all its enjoyments, aims and hopes is narrowed down to earthly things. But when freed from the dominion of gross passions and desires,—when it has the power and the will to cast out vicious thoughts and impulses, and to center its forces on what is high, pure, and ennobling, it is awakened into a new life. All

its actions strengthen it. It is uplifted and expanded, and its vision is made clearer by every effort it puts forth,— by every struggle it passes through. Its thoughts and aims being higher than its attainments, it is drawn upward by the influences and tendencies of its life.

If we were in a boat upon the water, drawing upon one end of a rope, and the other end were fastened to some point on the shore, we should be drawn towards that point. Now all the principles, tastes, and dispositions of our minds and hearts do go out and fasten to some point in the outward life. If that point is low, down in some pit of sensuality and crime, we shall surely be drawn down into its degradation. But if it is some high point at the head waters of purity, knowledge and virtue, we shall ascend, even though the tide flows against us. It will make little difference with us which way the current of the world sets; the current of our inmost life will run with irresistible force towards heaven. If we open in

the heart a pure and living fountain, its waters will find their level, though they pass through miasmatic regions, and sometimes seem lost in the marshes and deserts. The soul on which is mirrored the purity of heaven, and which lives consciously in the divine presence, draws life and strength from its heavenly communings.

Character has moral worth, only when it grows from its own self-denying, persistent, toiling energy. It has substance, foundation and virtue, when it is deliberately and resolutely adopted and cherished,—when it is the product of self-discipline, moral and religious convictions, and is maintained as a duty. It involves much self-denial. Its characteristic is not impulse or feeling, but a reverent sense of obligation. It is an effort to subject the will, desires, habits, to the will of God; to conform them to his laws, from the conviction that what he wills is the perfection of virtue and happiness.

Then let me set before you, my young readers, this purity of character, this depth

and sincerity of the inward life, this truthfulness of the thoughts, dispositions and purposes, as the first step in the pathway from youth to heaven. You can not go forward in this way, this straight and narrow path; you can make no progress in true life while your minds are defiled and poisoned by lust and low desire. In the picture of "The Court of Death" a bewildering mist is made to rise before the eyes of the youth about to drain the intoxicating cup, which hides from his view its fatal consequences. So each impure thought and emotion cherished in your minds, envelopes them in a mist of grossness; hides from your consciousness the evil of sin, and the beauty, dignity and glory of a virtuous life. That which you are doing, be it good or evil; that which you are doing to-day, and to-morrow, and every day, each thought and feeling, each action and event, every passing hour, every fleeting moment, is contributing something to form the character you sustain. Remember, then, that your characters are formed by these lit-

tle drops of influence that distil into your souls. Remember that your outward character will be a transcript of your inmost life. Remember that even one indulgence of intemperance, or lust, or profanity, or unlawful desire, even though it be in secret, is so much to pervert and corrupt your character. And every exercise of self-denial and reverent feeling, and every upright intention is a grain in the solid rock of a pure character. What, then, are the deeds you are doing, the thoughts you are thinking, the purposes you are intending? Every one of them will have an influence in forming your characters.

And do you understand how comprehensive character is? It pertains to every part and endowment of your being. Impurity may attach to your physical, mental, and moral endowments. How many young people develop coarse and gross bodies, which suppress the unfolding of the mind and heart. When we look upon them we have a painful consciousness of their impurity.

We feel that the earthly nature is their master; that its passions and desires are indulged to the detriment of the higher life; that they stand in the way, and are an insurmountable hindrance to intellectual and moral improvement. If the young will develop the finest type of character, it must be by constant self-control. The body must be the obedient servant of the higher faculties. The personal habits, the uses of the various members, passions, appetites and propensities must conform to the requirements of unsullied purity. The thoughts, the reason, the moral and spiritual impulses must submit to be taught and guided by a higher wisdom than their own.

This is a severe discipline. There are so many temptations to the wayward appetites, thoughts and desires, that, to put them all down, and ever act as rational and moral beings, is, indeed, a life-struggle. It requires more energy and force of character than it does to obtain wealth or fame, or to subdue kingdoms. Let not the young think they

can do this work with their own unaided strength. You need, my young friends, the help of God, — the influences of his spirit. Your constant prayer should be, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."

In general terms, we would counsel you to cultivate this purity of character by avoiding temptation, as far as you can, in the way of duty. Do not go into the presence of evil examples or influences needlessly. Place pure objects of thought before your minds. Think of good men, good deeds, good principles. Seek the society of the good and pure. Be with the truthful, just and kind as much as your opportunities will permit. Let your reading be choice, — such as will inspire your minds with chaste, high and generous emotions. More than all other books, read the Bible, for "the words of the Lord are pure words, the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes." Engage often in meditation, self-examination and prayer. You may not perceive the salutary



influences of these observances at any particular time, but they will silently and steadily lift you up. Your love of what is good will strengthen. Your aversion to impurity will increase until it will have little power to tempt you. The purer the heart is, the more of beauty and goodness do we see in all men and things. "Unto the pure all things are pure, but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled." The young ought to find inspiration and encouragement in the sweet beatitude, "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God." They shall see him through the vision of faith and love,—in the holy light that fills the soul when it opens towards him in prayer,—in the soft, warm beams that cheer it in affliction and fall around the pathway of duty. Such a life is truly blessed. It moves smoothly on in the way of improvement. All the faculties act promptly and harmoniously. Duty is pleasant. There are no inward hindrances to its

performance. Outward obstacles are easily overcome, and do but strengthen the soul. It is blessed in its own peaceful experiences; blessed in the influences it exerts upon the world; blessed in the progress it is prepared to make.

## II.

### THOUGHTFULNESS.

**W**E once spent a night near a railroad station, where several lines of roads meet, and where is an engine depot. Early in the morning, before the ringing of the breakfast bell, we walked out and found our way into this building, to look at the truly grand and wonderful specimens of mechanism it contained. There was something grand and impressive in their appearance. There they stood in silent dignity and majesty, stern and grim, seeming almost conscious of their own irresistible strength, and defying the puny strength of man. As we gazed upon them, we were deeply moved with a sense of latent power, of slumbering force and of consummate skill. Soon our attention was drawn to the labor-

ers who passed round among the engines with cloth and can, and carefully wiped and oiled each one, until it was clean and smooth, and its original polish shone forth.

Then the question came up in our mind, In what consists the grandeur and beauty of these works? Why have they been constructed with such perfection of skill? Why are they cared for, polished, cleaned and oiled with so much labor and expense? It is not that they may stand here inactive. If we knew of no service to which they could be put, we might indeed view them with wonder and awe, as we should look upon Egyptian pyramids, but they would not inspire our admiration. We admire them because they are now in readiness for use; because they are adapted to a specific work, and their various parts can act naturally, easily and freely. If we had known they were to stand there, rust and go to decay without ever speeding the cars, passengers and freight over the track, we should have viewed them as a work of folly, or at best, as

of little utility. It was their fitness to be fired and to draw the long, heavy train to the distant city or town,—to move the burdens and do the work that would require hundreds and thousands of men and beasts,—it was this knowledge of them that made them so expressive of power and grandeur to our mind. We could not view them independently, as they stood there motionless. We associated them with their design and work. We saw them in the light of their possibilities, puffing away through country and town, bearing the messages and the wealth, and doing the business of the country. We identified them with all the activities of life,—with the enterprise and commerce of the world.

In the preceding chapter, we spoke of purity of character as the first step in the pathway from youth to heaven, as an indispensable preparation for a life of progress. But purity alone is not progress, any more than the polished engine, standing in the depot, is the power that moves men and

goes with lightning speed from one end of the land to the other. The engine must be fired; moved by the propelling force of steam; the boiler heated, the wheels set in motion, and the whole apparatus made active. So must all the powers and faculties of our being be put to action before we can go forward in the pathway of progress.

We remember that while our first parents were in a state of passive innocence, in the garden, it is said, their eyes were not opened to know good and evil. Their faculties had not been aroused to action. Though innocent, they had not awakened to a consciousness of life's reality. The mind may be pure, and yet not do its proper work. It may be guileless, and yet inactive and simple. It may mean well, and yet be weakened and undeveloped. Purity sets it free; enables it to act without hindrance; removes all obstacles to action. But there must be action, — the putting forth of power and effort, before there can be progress. The engine must move. No matter how clean and polished it

is, there it stands, powerless until all its parts are put to service.

The young should realize that mere passive innocence will not fulfill the mission on which they are sent into this world. After their minds are cleansed from all impure desires and principles, and their hearts regenerated by the Divine Spirit, they should immediately begin the search for positive knowledge and virtue. The soul must have something positive to feed on. If you cleanse it of impure thoughts and purposes, and do not provide it pure ones in their place, it will go back to its old thoughts. This is the truth taught by the Savior and applied to his own age and countrymen. He says when the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walks through dry places, seeking rest and finds none. Then he says, "I will return to my house from whence I came out"; and returning, he finds it empty, swept and garnished. Then he goes and takes with himself seven other spirits, more wicked than himself, and they enter in and

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dwell there, and "the last state of that man is worse than the first." If the unfortunate man, as soon as the evil spirit had gone out, had invited the good spirit to enter in, his old enemy would have found no room in his heart either to return himself or to bring in his brood of more wicked spirits. It was because his heart was permitted to remain empty that he was ruined. If God had not intended the mind should be active in investigating and receiving positive principles of truth and right, he would have given us only negative precepts to teach us how to avoid evil. But such is not the character of his word. It is both negative and positive. It not only says, Thou shalt do no evil, but also, Thou shalt do much good. Its requirements are as numerous as its prohibitions. And in this, it recognizes the mind's need of activity,—its power of thought.

These considerations show the young that if they will make progress, they must not only cleanse their minds and hearts from all impurity, but fill them with knowledge and



positive convictions. They must be active in searching for truth, and establish for themselves settled principles of thought and action. Nothing more debilitates the mind than to leave it vacant, idle, or wandering. In one case it famishes; in another, its forces are wasted to no purpose; and in the other, it has not the activity required to develop its life. There is no other way to develop mind but to set it in motion,—not lawless, aimless motion, but subject to its own principles of order. It must be put to thinking. It was made to think. It was given us for this specific purpose. Every part of our nature grows by action in its peculiar sphere. The hand is strengthened by toil. The muscles are enlarged by every strain put upon them. The ear is quickened by hearing; the eye by seeing. The lungs are made strong by speaking. These are their peculiar uses. The peculiar use of the mind is to think, and it is developed by thought. As the organs of the body are dwarfed and debilitated by inaction, so the mind is stunted and weak-

ened by a thoughtless life. In the degree it is dormant, it is dead. But so far as all its faculties are awake and active, it is alive. When active, it expands, unfolds latent forces and reveals greater power.

Physical activity alone will not, *can* not secure to a rational being growth and progress. The brutes have more of this than man, yet they make no progress. They learn nothing from age to age. They have no higher attainments now than when God made them, and brought them to Adam to give them names. It is because they do not think. They cannot reflect and reason upon their various experiences. And so far as men fail to do this, they are like the brute. There are many people who are endowed with good intellectual and moral powers. They are in good circumstances, have many opportunities, and live from youth to age an intensely active life. Yet they learn little or nothing. They make no progress as rational and moral beings. Sometimes they seem to go backward, and are not

as far advanced in knowledge and virtue in old age as they were in youth. They become grosser, narrower, weaker, as life passes away. It is because they live thoughtless lives. They permit the selfish, earthly passions to hold the intellectual and moral faculties in bondage.

It is a well settled conclusion of mental science that the intellectual activity and effort put forth in the acquisition of knowledge is of more value to a rational being than the knowledge itself. The *search* for truth does more to develop and perfect man than the truth itself. This has been affirmed many times by philosophers. Plato says, man is "the hunter of truth." Aristotle asserts that "the intellect is perfected not by knowledge but by activity." "The intellect," says Aquinas, "commences in operation, and in operation it ends." And Scotus declares that "a man's knowledge is measured by the amount of his mental activity."

Some later writers have expressed this opinion in quite bold and emphatic terms.

Malebranche asserts that if he held truth captive in his hand, he should open his hand and let it fly, that he might again pursue and capture it. "Did the Almighty," says Lessing, "holding in his right hand *Truth*, and in his left, *Search after Truth*, deign to tender me the one I might prefer,—in all humility, but without hesitation I should request, *Search after Truth*." Truth is the property of God; the *pursuit* of truth is what belongs to man. It is not the *goal*, but the *course* which makes us happy."

These statements are very positive, perhaps exaggerated, but a great truth underlies them. There is wonderful power in mental activity, in close thought, to unfold and strengthen human nature. It stirs our being to the lowest depth. We may sit down and think closely upon any subject and soon we find all our faculties excited; the nerves are convulsed; the limbs move unconsciously; the countenance is flushed or pale; the eyes are set or sparkle, or fill with tears; the heart beats; the lungs

heave or the breath is stopped. Who has not observed these effects of intense thought upon the physical frame? It will also move the heart to pity or rage; fill it with the strongest emotions of love or hatred, fear and revenge, discontent, ambition, hope, desire and expectation. It will sometimes reach the moral and spiritual faculties,—elevating the heart in reverence, adoration and praise; inspiring faith, hope and charity. Indeed, there is not a faculty of our being that thought will not sometimes move. There is not one that is not blighted by its absence. There can be no true progress, no elevation and expansion of character without it. It leaves us to come under the sway of the senses. Our reason becomes prejudice; Our reverence superstition; our love, sensuality, and our judgment a wild fancy. Certainly, thoughtfulness is indispensable to all real, substantial improvement, the second step in the pathway from youth to heaven. When the mind is purified and is free to think aright, to think without prejudice or

passion, to think clearly, calmly, forcibly, then it *should think*. It should reason upon all the questions pertaining to life and duty. The more we think, the more shall we know and enjoy.

We commend thoughtfulness to the young, not as a moral quality, but as an indispensable condition to an intelligent and lofty exercise of the moral and spiritual faculties. It is the portal through which they must enter into the higher spheres and experiences of life. It prepares the way for the advance of all the faculties. It breaks the clouds that darken life, and enables us to behold it in all its glorious significance.

*Think*, then, young readers ;—think *closely, constantly*. Do not let your minds be vacant, dormant, lawless and wandering. Think *earnestly*. Exert yourselves to put your minds upon some subject, and strive to investigate it thoroughly and systematically. Even if you do not think aright, if you do not come to right conclusions on all subjects, the effort will strengthen and enlighten

you. Your power of thought will be increased. Your range of ideas will be enlarged. Your whole being will be expanded. You will be elevated to a higher plane of life, and find yourselves brought into a better condition by the effort.

You may learn the importance of thoughtfulness to yourselves, and to all rational beings, by considering how many things there are to think of in this world ; how many things it is important that you should understand. Your own being is full of mysteries, full of wonders, full of the profoundest wisdom. The sublime and beautiful mechanism of your bodies presents material for thought. And it is essential to your health, happiness and usefulness that you should understand it. You cannot live aright, or preserve your existence in its natural beauty and longevity without understanding it. And you cannot understand it without studying its laws and the principles they involve. In a word, you must *think* upon them.

Consider too, the profound mysteries of

the human mind. The wisest, the most learned men of all ages, have studied it, and yet it opens greater depths to which they cannot penetrate. You may look in upon the invisible faculties with which you think, and they will reveal the sublimest laws, infinite powers and matchless forces. And nothing can so stir and expand the mind as this reflex action. "Considered in itself, a knowledge of the human mind, whether we regard its speculative or practical importance, is confessedly, of all studies, the highest and most interesting." "On earth," says a great philosopher, "there is nothing great but man; in man, there is nothing great but mind." No other study fills and satisfies the soul like the study of itself. No other science presents an object to be compared in dignity, in absolute or in relative value, to that which human consciousness furnishes to its own contemplation."

And how many objects are there without, in the world around you, upon which you may expend profitable thought. Consider



the vastness, the grandeur, the order and beauty of nature. From the smallest grain of dust, to the immeasurable planet, there is wisdom pervading every thing;—wisdom surpassing the most distant reach of human thought. The common transactions of life also,—the daily events of business, pleasure, society; the days of prosperity and adversity; the hours of health and sickness, are all suggestive of interesting and instructive thought. And closely allied to these are practical, moral questions, pertaining to your private lives; to your modes of thought; to your dispositions, principles and habits, on which you should think. What use are you making of your time? How much of it are you spending in places of public resort, where low, vulgar, profane language is used, where intoxicating drinks are sold and drank, where men of gross passions and habits congregate, and vicious tastes are cultivated? Young reader, stop and think whether it is better for you to attend the *ball* or the scientific *lecture*. *Think* whether it will do you

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more good to purchase the *dram* or the *book*. *Think* whether you will learn more by reading the *novel* or the *history*. *Think* which will do more for your moral and intellectual improvement *gaming*, or *studying* works of science. *Think* which is more manly *swearing* or *praying*, *appearing* or *being* virtuous and learned and enterprising. It is only a lack of thought upon these points that betrays the young into error. If you will stop and think, young reader, you will perceive at once, that you cannot sustain both these characters; and you will not fail in determining which is most desirable.

There are also great social and political questions upon which it is the duty of every young person to think. Here, in our own country and time, are being discussed themes of vital importance, not only to individual welfare, but to the stability, order and progress of society. They reach to the foundations of civil government, and will, to a great extent decide the morality, security and peace of society for a long time to come.

Immediately upon us, for our decision, is the question of woman's relation to practical life. What is her sphere in society? What fitness and claim has she for education, for civil and political privileges and emoluments, for the professions and many other pursuits from which she has been excluded? Many of our old ideas upon this subject are being vigorously challenged and essentially modified in the public mind. It is a question the American people cannot evade. It is already up for decision, as a political issue, and it demands the earnest, serious thought of every patriot and friend of human progress. Young friends, you must not let this question be decided wrong, merely because you are too indolent, or too indifferent to think upon it. It *must* be met, but you cannot be prepared to consider it intelligently and without prejudice until you think of it. The more thought you give it, the surer you will be to decide aright.

Probably this, and other great questions now beginning to excite public attention,

will be referred to those who are now young, for final action. The question of the equal, civil and political rights of all men is one, that at no distant day will move the heart of this nation as few others have. It cannot be settled or put to rest by one election, or by the defeat or success of any party. It touches the fundamental principles of a republican government. It is the old question of freedom, in a new form, and will never be settled until justice is done to all men. Have the young studied the vital principles involved? Have they thought upon this subject as one above all party and local interests, comprehending universal principles?

The old question of temperance, so long discussed, almost disposed of, as we had thought, is returning upon us, with increased importance. The evil of intemperance is not removed. It is still the greatest evil in the world. It is still destroying the bodies and souls of men. It is still making wretched wives and mothers and children. It is still blighting the prospects of the young, and

turning men and women of every age and social condition into demons. Have the young seriously thought of the extent and virulence of this evil? Have they sought to know how it may be abolished? O, young readers, consider, *think* what you may do for humanity, as the champions of the Temperance Cause. Every word and work you give it is given to remove poverty, crime and wretchedness.

There is another question on which we would have the young think much and earnestly. A part of our country has recently been desolated by the ravages of war. Indeed the whole country was desolated. Harvests were destroyed, 'houses demolished, cities laid in ruins, the wealth of the nation swallowed up as if thrown into a whirlpool, hundreds and thousands of men slaughtered in a day ; left wounded and bleeding to die upon the cold earth ;—thrown into loathsome prisons to starve and freeze. Every conceivable crime and misery attended it from beginning to end. It is thus with all wars.

It cannot be otherwise. From the beginning of time war has been characterized by every conceivable crime and cruelty. It ever must be.

Now we want the young to pause and think of this evil. We want them to rise above passion and prejudice, and to consider whether individuals or nations can *ever* be justified in perpetrating it. All admit that war is intrinsically one of the greatest evils. An inspired apostle assures us that wars and fightings come of our earthly lusts and unsanctified, unbelieving hearts. The history of all wars confirms his statement. This being true, we would have the young consider if it is not their duty to cast their influence in favor of peace as against all wars and fighting, to stand on the doctrines and precepts of the gospel, making Jesus Christ the only interpreter of truth and duty. Do not take the spirit of your age as the standard of duty. This may be corrupt and the offspring of error, but the Savior bears witness to the truth. Ask him whether war

is *always* wrong, or *sometimes* justifiable, whether it is forbidden or approved in the gospel. There are those who believe it is incompatible with Christianity, who believe that capital punishment and all intentional destruction of human life is wrong, unchristian, barbarous, that it is worse than useless, promoting instead of preventing violence and crime among men, that it is an assumption of the prerogative of God and a violation of his command, "Thou shalt not kill."

We invite your attention to these points, not for the purpose of discussing them, but as indicating what seem to us the most important subjects of thought. There are others, such as the questions of Labor, Reform in our systems of Education, Amusements, that are gradually coming before the people, and upon which the young ought to prepare themselves, by thoughtfulness, to pass an intelligent judgment. If they wish to fill the places of *men* and *women* in society, if they wish to count for anything in the world, they must inform themselves upon all these

points. They must not only read what is being written in books and papers, but think upon what they read. They must select carefully the writings of those who are known for their wisdom and virtue, and not throw their time and study away on the fancies of the ignorant and unreliable.

But there is yet a greater question, that underlies, not only these social problems, but all other questions, upon which the young ought to think. It is the great, the fundamental question of Religion. Here you are, young readers, in a world of life, of activity, of suffering and enjoyment, of inward virtue. How came you here? By what Power are you sustained in life? What are your obligations and duties? What is your destiny? Certainly, these are questions that ought to interest you. Have you ever paused to think of them?

Running parallel with them we have the Bible, claiming to be God's own explanation of them. It tells us of the Infinite Father of all, the Creator, the Sustainer, the Gov-



ernor, the Disposer of all worlds and beings. It tells us of our accountability to him, and dependance on him. It reveals his will, his holy requirements and the rewards and penalties of our conduct in life. It shows us that we are sinners; that we have transgressed the laws of God and lost a true knowledge of him; that we are in a fallen and wretched condition. From this point of view it shows us our need of salvation, or deliverance from sin, and reconciliation to God, and proceeds to develop a plan for human redemption. It gives us prophets and teachers, sent from God to warn and instruct men, and to call them to repentance. And finally it reveals a Savior, coming forth from the bosom of the Father, his "Only Begotten Son, full of grace and truth," empowered and commissioned to make an end of sin, finish transgression and bring in everlasting righteousness. \* His "work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever." It describes the pro-

cess and agencies of his work in the hearts of men, bringing them to exercise "repentance toward God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ;" renewing and sanctifying them by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Here, young friends, is a vast field for the exercise of thought. It is not speculative but practical thought, thought upon subjects vital to your happiness, to your well being both now and forever. You cannot fulfill the purposes of rational existence without seriously considering these themes. If you live thoughtless of God, and of your relations to him, insensible of gratitude for his mercies, neglectful of the opportunities he has given you, and disobedient to his requirements, you cannot rise toward that heavenly life, to which he in his word invites you. You are accountable for your thoughts. They are the fountain from whence actions flow. "As a man thinketh so is he." This is true, both of the quality and extent of our thoughts. Thought makes character. As we think so are our dispositions, princi-

ples, habits. Character deepens or becomes superficial in proportion to the depths or shallowness of our thoughts. Moral convictions rise and fall with thought. It is the mercurial element, that indicates the degree of intensity in the life. It is because it so accurately indicates the power and force of our being that so much importance is given it in the Scriptures. They tell us "the thought of foolishness is sin." For this reason the apostle Peter told Simon to "pray God, if perhaps the *thought* of his heart might be forgiven him." For the same reason we are urged to "bring into captivity every *thought* to the obedience of Christ."

Remember, then, young readers, that "the thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord." Let your constant prayer be, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

### III.

#### HUMILITY.

**I**T is said that Michael Angelo, the celebrated artist carved out his masterpiece upon his knees. His mind could not perceive the delicate features and fine lineaments of the design until his inmost soul meekly bowed before it. All his feelings were subdued and humbled in the presence of the ideal perfection he sought to realize in his work. Day after day he wrought, kneeling beside the rough, unshapen stone, as if adorning the beautiful form concealed within. This fact in the life of one whose genius shines brighter and brighter in the increasing light of the ages, faithfully represents the attitude our best endowments must assume in order to achieve their greatest triumphs. It is the attitude of *humility*.

We have spoken of thoughtfulness, as the second step in the pathway from youth to heaven. The first effort of the young should be to emancipate their minds and hearts from the dominion of every principle and passion that weighs them down in ignorance and earthliness, that obscures their vision or paralyzes their action. Then they should be aroused to action, each in its own appropriate sphere.

But there are dangers peculiar to every stage in human progress. All the promises and hopes and aspirations of life are deceptive if we put unlimited confidence in them, if we do not guard against the exposures and dangers that hide beneath them. The poet says too truly,

“ Vipers hide among the grass and  
Briers are woven in the hedges.”

At the first step in life the young are exposed to the danger of thinking that mere passive purity of character is all that is required of them. But experience and observation will now teach you, my young

friends, that the life that does nothing but keep itself from contamination is of little worth to the world. Our existence was not given us merely to be washed and cleansed and ministered to. There is work for us all,—great thoughts to think and great, deeds to do. Our minds and hands should be occupied not only with themselves but with the interests of humanity.

But there are dangers attending even a life of thoughtfulness and study. The besetting sin of the reasoning mind is, and ever has been, pride, self-dependence, the exclusive spirit that refuses the ministries of the other faculties and boasts of its own sufficiency for all the purposes of life. So marked and common a weakness is this, that we speak of proud and boastful reason, of proud science, and proud philosophy. The danger is not that any man will think or reason too much, but that he will think and reason too exclusively, too proudly and assumptively,—that he will depend solely upon thought and reason for guidance.

The young ought to learn, as the first lesson of life, that there are limits to human thought, that there are questions reason alone is not competent to decide. If you begin life, young readers, with the belief that cold, logical thought and unbending reason are a sufficient guide and support in all the experiences of life, that they will serve you in every crisis, and keep you in in every trial, you will not only be disappointed, but unavoidably be led into a narrow, boastful pride that takes but a partial and superficial view of all questions.

Man is a compound being. He has various organs, faculties and powers. Each of these endowments has its appropriate sphere and office,—is given to fill a specific place in the economy of his life. And no one of these faculties or functions is competent to fill the place, or do the work of another. The sensations of the body cannot determine the extent of the powers and possibilities of the mind. Nor can the mind fully comprehend the sensations of the body.

The intellect has its peculiar office and work. The moral nature has its sphere of operation. The spiritual powers have theirs. It is for each to judge of things within its sphere. True, these various endowments blend, and modify each other to some extent. They exist together, and co-operate in the same character. But each was given as a distinct part of the complete character. And reason can no more sit in judgment over the affections, or over reverence or imagination, than these can decide upon a purely rational theme.

We perceive, then, that the assumption of the sufficiency and supremacy of reason in everything is in itself arrogance. It is a virtual rejection of all our other endowments. It pours contempt upon affection, reverence, spirituality, and all the other faculties of our being. It declares them useless. It shuts out of the soul all the light and life that would flow into it through the many avenues that lead into it from God and his works.



Hence the exaltation of the intellectual powers over the other faculties has ever produced a disdainful, contemptuous spirit, a narrow, selfish disposition that is attracted towards humanity only by intellectual brilliancy and strength. For the ignorant, the dull and the imbecile it has only disgust and contempt. Your mere intellectual man is always a cold, dry, heartless man. He has little sympathy with the world around him, little interest in moral questions,—in the struggles of right and wrong, truth and falsehood. And he has as little reverence for God, as love for man. He lives in the abstract realm of thought,—believes that study into the philosophy of things is enough to satisfy the wants of his soul. He is but the fraction of a man. Only one part of his nature is alive and active. Interrupt what is purely intellectual in his life, and he would be a personification of ignorance and stupidity. He would stand in the world like the dry and barkless stump of a dead tree. Yet such men are usually proud of

their attainments. They imagine they know more than other people. They ridicule what they call the ignorance, superstitions and weakness of those of less showy but more substantial attainments.

True humility will save the young from this narrowness. As it is pride of intellect that leads to it, so an humble mind, deeply sensible of its own limitations, and of its need of quickening and enlightening by the action of the other faculties, will develop on a broader scale. The greatest obstacle to our improvement is insensibility to our need of it. If we think we can reason out and understand all that we need to know, we cannot have a sense of want. If we are sufficient of ourselves, why should we seek for aid? But if we humbly realize the limitation of all our powers, if we feel our ignorance, weakness and dependence; if we are conscious that each and all our faculties are insufficient of themselves alone to give us a full culture, then shall we look for light through every window of our being. We

shall know that there is more than one medium of communication between the soul and its Maker, that instruction can flow into it through the heart as well as the mind ; that the affections, the moral sentiments, the devotional faculties, faith, hope, love, can teach it. There can be as valuable lessons learned in the exercise of forgiveness, charity, patience, meekness, as in the study of the sciences. We mean there can be as much discipline of the various faculties, as much development and strengthening of the higher intellectual and moral powers. You can learn, my young readers, not precisely the same thing, but as much that pertains to the highest well being of a rational life, on your knees, in prayer to God, or in searching, self-examination, or in an humble study of the Scriptures, or in a faithful, conscientious discharge of life's duties, in resisting temptations, subduing unruly passions, cultivating a sense of justice, becoming more manly and womanly,—you can learn as much in such exercises that will adorn and perfect

your natures as you can in the study of Virgil or Hamilton.

We would not be understood to array intellectual pursuits and attainments against moral and spiritual improvement, or to intimate any conflict between them. It is precisely this disposition to originate a conflict between them, to exclude the instruction of one faculty or set of faculties for the light of another, that we oppose. It is against the pride of heart which insists upon the sufficiency of reason alone, or the affections alone, or reverence alone, that we protest. We plead for that humility which is willing to learn by *all* the means of instruction God has given us. This willingness is true humility. It feels a sense of weakness, blindness, need. It looks up for more light. It reaches out its hand for support and guidance. It listens to catch the voice of instruction. It receives the word of wisdom, whoever may utter it. It puts far away the pride, the prejudice, the passion that would close the mind against the en-

trance of instruction. It never feels that it knows enough, or that it can learn no more. It is teachable, reverent, just. It strives for purity of character. It thinks much. It is active and earnest, but it realizes how far below the highest ideal its best attainments fall. It is sensible of personal imperfection, weakness and want. And in all its longings for wisdom and efforts for improvement, it never makes self an end. Personal glorification is not its object, for it always views itself simply as an agent in the hands of God. Man is glorified only in reflecting the higher glory of the Father. As human character shines with the radiance of the Divine, as its vision turns upward to catch the beams of wisdom and purity that stream down from "the Father of lights," as it seeks and displays its virtues and graces as the gifts of infinite love for which it feels dependent, indebted and grateful, does it make true progress, and enjoy a true life. And this is the spirit of humility.

We have found a chapter in Thomas

A'Kempis' "Imitation of Christ," on "Humility with respect to intellectual attainments," with which we are much pleased, and which we will here introduce, with slight variations, as a good illustration of our theme.

He says, "Every man naturally desires to increase in knowledge; but what doth knowledge profit without the fear of the Lord. Better is the humble man who serveth God than the proud philosopher who, destitute of the knowledge of himself, can describe the course of the planets. He who truly knows himself becomes impure in his own eyes, and has little delight in the praise of men. If I knew all that the world contains, and had not humility, what would it avail me in the sight of God who will judge me according to the spirit of my mind.

"Rest from an inordinate desire of knowledge, for it is subject to much perplexity and delusion. Learned men are not always wise." They are often fond of the notice of the world, and desire to be accounted wise.

But there are many things the knowledge of which has no tendency to promote a true life; and it is surely a proof of folly to devote ourselves wholly to that with which our supreme good has no connection. The soul is not to be satisfied with the multitude of words, but a devout, humble life is a continual feast; and a pure conscience the foundation of a firm and immovable confidence in God. The more thou knowest, and the better thou understandest, the more severe will be thy condemnation, unless thy life be proportionably more holy. Be not, therefore, exalted, for any uncommon skill in any art or science, but let the superior knowledge that is given thee, make thee more humble, and more watchful over thyself. If thou supposest that thou knowest many things, and hast perfect understanding of them, consider how many more things there are, which thou knowest not at all; and instead of being exalted with a high opinion of thy great knowledge, be rather abased with an humble sense of thy much greater ignorance. And

why dost thou prefer thyself to another, since thou mayest find many more learned than thou art, and better instructed in the will of God."

"The highest and most profitable learning is the knowledge of ourselves. And to have an humble opinion of our own merit, and always to think well and highly of others, is an evidence of great wisdom and perfection. Therefore, though thou seest another openly offend, yet let it not cause thee to value thyself for thy superior goodness; for thou canst not tell how long thou wilt be able to persevere in the narrow path of virtue. All men are frail, but thou shouldst account none so frail as thyself."

Some of these simple but beautiful sentences remind us of the Savior's words in the "Sermon on the Mount," "Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" The answer is, selfish pride hides the beam in our own eye. Would we come down from our loftiness,



would we humble ourselves to the work of faithful self-inspection, our own darkness would seem greater than any other's.

If you live in this state of mind, young readers, you will ever be prepared for improvement, for humility is not passivity. It is not inconsistent with deep, earnest convictions and purposes. It is not cowardice. It may co-exist with positive, energetic principles and practices. It is manly, womanly. It has strength and power. By the humble—to borrow the thought of an eloquent divine of our own time and country,—we understand those who are conscious of their spiritual wants, their shortcomings and dependence,—the trustful, the lowly in soul. We understand those who mourn, not because of outward, but inward necessities, and in the consciousness of their condition, keep near the divine source of help and guidance. Humility is a spirit opposed to self-righteousness and self-will, to boastfulness, pride and presumption.

And this is really the ground of all true

advancement and exaltation, of all genuine excellence and power. Self-conceit and haughtiness, or fullness of soul are barriers to progress; they are generally, the landmarks of shallow attainments. The true man is never inflated by his attainments, but probes his deficiencies and keeps his eye on ideal perfection. The actual hero stoops to conquer. The sincere seeker for wisdom gets low that he may find. The scholar is more encumbered by the consciousness of what he lacks than by the wealth of his acquisitions; and the saint is so busy with what is yet required, that he has little time to count what has been achieved. And so these are driven forward to larger conquests. Their humility becomes one of the elements of their progress.

Permit me, then, to urge the young men and women who may read these pages, to cherish this spirit. Possessed of it your minds will be open to conviction. You will be willing to see, and confess your faults, to correct your errors, to receive admonition

and even rebuke. You will escape that offensive egotism, pedantry and dogmatism so often exhibited by both young and old. You will abhor duplicity and all false appearances. Shams and counterfeits will have no place in your lives. As far as you go, you will build on solid ground. Your minds will move on by their own laws to sure and high attainments. There will be nothing strained or unnatural in your characters or appearance. Your progress may be slow, but it will be constant and substantial. It will not be the uneven, unnatural and flashy development of one faculty, the excitement and sparkling of one power at the expense of all the others. But it will be the healthful growth of your entire being. It will secure the harmonious action of the intellectual, moral and spiritual forces. It will impart beauty and sweetness to the whole character, and enrich every department of life's labor and experience.

We admire sparkling genius and polished manners. We applaud heroic and daring

goodness in brave conflict with wrong. But when these qualities are combined with humility, we love them as we cannot in its absence. Without humility there is too much of harshness and severity in the character, too much love of self, too much self-seeking and self-glorification. Humility is the gentle grace that veils personal aims behind the lustre of goodness. The individual is lost in the admiration which his virtues inspire. It is by its retiring, meek and humble spirit that the great soul makes itself known and felt. Humility is a sure token of wisdom and piety. It is the spirit of true prayer. "Humble yourselves beneath the mighty hand of God and he shall exalt you in due time." "The proud are an abomination unto the Lord, but he heareth the cry of the humble." He will not listen to those who thank him that they are not as other men, but he justifies such as smite upon their breasts and cry, "God be merciful."

Indeed, it seems to us that this spirit of

humility is the life spirit of true religion. A quiet, peaceful life, filled with unpublished acts of charity, bathed in the atmosphere of devotion, warmed and vitalized by that love which is not in word only, but in deed and in truth, is the one the Father seeth in secret and rewardeth openly. O, how we love the unpretending, humble minded, sincere Christian. How brightly his character shines as an example. It is with difficulty we can tell what he has done or said to awaken our admiration. It is not his brilliancy or great achievements that enkindle our love. He has made no great speech; he has done no wonderful deeds; there are no dazzling parts in his character. But like the sun it is all ablaze with glory. Its light and life sweep the whole circle of souls around it. Though it seek to veil itself from the public gaze, like the sun hiding behind the drapery of clouds, yet its radiance will stream forth in floods of soft, pure light, and fringe each cloud with the hues of celestial beauty.

By imbuing your lives with this spirit, you can make them a perpetual blessing to the world. It is the great want of our age and country. It is the Christian grace least cultivated, least appreciated and commended in our Christian literature. If we had more of it, our religious differences would not so often be marked by bitterness of feeling, and the best enterprises spoiled by contention. Society wants men and women who are not striving chiefly for pre-eminence; who have something more to give it than their short-lived personality; who can bequeath it principles; breathe into its life the spirit of immortal love and tenderness. It wants those who can engage in more than one kind of work and enjoy it; who can appreciate the appeal of more than one class of facts, feel the claim of more than one set of interests;—those who can take broad and comprehensive views; appreciate the claims of universal humanity, and offer a loving heart and helping hand to feel and toil for the most lowly and needy.

Pride cannot identify itself with humanity, as such. Dress it in broadcloth or silk, enstate it in a splendid mansion or upon a throne, and it will reverence it. But clothe it in rags, cover it with the dust and grim of toil, cast it into poor house or the prison, make it loathsome with disease and it has no respect for it. It looks to classes and conditions. But humility perceives but one common life-current running through all the diversified forms and conditions of human existence. It is willing to share the common heritage of imperfection, sin and sorrow, and to do its part in lifting the burden from the throbbing heart of humanity. It delights in works of mercy among the poor and the lowly. It is never ashamed to own any human being as a brother or a sister. It may blush for its own or others' guilt, but humanity itself, it ever owns and honors. In the spirit and words of the Great Teacher and Pattern of humility it says to all classes and conditions, Come unto me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.

There are, in the Word of God, many assurances of blessing to those who are of an humble mind. "Every one who exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." When we regard the weaknesses and infirmities of our fellow creatures, when we cover their frailties, relieve their wants, compassionate their distresses, we set our hearts and affections right towards God, and they are lifted up. We dwell in the secret place of the Most High. Thus in humbling ourselves we are exalted.

"God many a spiritual house has reared, but never one,  
Where lowliness was not laid first,—the corner stone."

How clearly is this thought expressed by Eliphaz in his address to the patriarch Job. "When men are cast down, then thou shalt say, There is lifting up; and he shall save the humble person." "Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly. By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches and honor and life. A man's pride shall bring him low, but honor shall uphold



the humble in spirit. Thus saith the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy ; I dwell in the high and holy place ; with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." If we turn over into the New Testament we hear our Savior say, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, Blessed are the meek." Again we read, "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up." Indeed, revelation everywhere breathes the spirit of humility. We might fill our pages with passages from the divine Word surcharged with this sweet sentiment. Probably more could be gathered from the Bible, treating upon this subject than from all our religious books and volumes of theology. If we look for it, we shall find it pervading many passages where the word is not mentioned. If we study carefully the characters of prophets and apostles, we shall feel it breathing in

their words and see it in their acts, even in their boldest conflicts.

Without humility the young can never truly know themselves. It requires much lowliness of mind, much sincerity and truthfulness to look into the heart and scan its motives, dispositions, principles and purposes. But until we do this, we cannot know ourselves. There are many hiding places in the human heart, where evil lurks unseen and unknown for a long time. But if it is not searched out and driven from its retreat, it will spring upon us in an unexpected hour and be our ruin. Pride recoils from this work of self-searching, but humility points to it as our only safety. Thus we may pass from the very roots of life to its top-most boughs, and in every stage of its development humility has something to do for it. Whether in the secret discipline of the mind and heart; or in the cultivation and exercise of our social natures; or in the performance of our religious duties, humility is not only a vital force, but

a crowning glory. Are we not right, then, in numbering it among the steps in the pathway from youth to heaven? Can you, my young readers, ever mount the celestial heights, into the presence of God without it? He dwells only with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit. May you all be able to say from a happy experience, "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

## IV.

### EARNESTNESS.

**T**HE historian informs us that when Xavier was preparing to go forth on that mission which stamped his influence on millions through the East, and gave him an undying name in the annals of heroic, Christian daring, his friend who shared his sleeping apartment, was awakened in the night, by his earnest exclamations. He heard him tossing restlessly on his couch, and at times there came from the lips of the sleeping man the agitated appeal, "Yet more, O, my God, yet more."

Months afterwards, when about to leave his native land, he told the dream. He had seen in his slumbers, the wild and terrible future of his career spread out before him. There were barbarous regions, islands and

continents and mighty empires which he was to win to the truth. Storms swept around them, and hunger and thirst were everywhere, and death in many a fearful form, yet he shrank not from them. He was willing to dare the peril if he could only win the prize. He yearned for still wider fields of labor, and with a passion as absorbing as the ambition that leads on the statesman and the warrior filling every faculty, and haunting him even in his slumbers, he exclaimed, "Yet more, O, my God, yet more, The meditations of the day shaped the visions of the night." His entire being was consecrated to the work of Christ. He went forth to offer his life, if necessary, a sacrifice on the altar of Christian duty. Like the great Apostle, he was "ready to be offered." He was prepared to "fight the good fight and to keep the faith."

In this chapter we are to speak to the young of earnestness as the fourth step in the pathway from youth to heaven. But we would not have them regard it as fourth or

even second in importance, but simply as occupying this place in the development of our theme, for the sake of order and convenience. We place it next after humility, because it is the characteristic which naturally prevents that virtue from degenerating into passive servility. Humility and earnestness may balance each other in our characters, and prevent our becoming either facile or stubborn.

In the sketch from the life of Xavier which we have placed at the head of this chapter, the young have an illustration of our meaning when we assure them that Earnestness is indispensable to their success in life ; that it is one of the steps in the pathway to heaven. They must be fired with his all-conquering spirit, have something of his ardor and consecration.

You will never accomplish anything worthy of yourselves, or of rational, moral beings, my young friends, without determination and earnestness of purpose. If you will achieve the victory of life, like Xavier, you

must consecrate all the energies of your being to its work. Whatever your hands find to do, let them perform it with all your might. Act as those who realize that they are sent into the world for a purpose, that they have a mission among men, that a work is assigned them to do on earth, and that they have but a short time to do it. Do not act as if time were eternity, as if its hours and opportunities were so numerous as to be of little value. As matter of fact this is not true. The longest life on earth is short. The farther we advance, the swifter the days and years seem to pass. Even if we continue here eighty or ninety years, as comparatively few do, we cannot reckon more than forty or fifty of these, as affording opportunities for improvement or usefulness. If we accomplish anything of lasting importance to ourselves or the world it must be by persistent effort, by the strictest economy of time and means. When we consider the amount of work that should be done in this brief period,—when we count up the

personal and social obligations resting upon us,—the physical, intellectual and spiritual wants to be supplied, we feel the force of the inspired words, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work nor device, nor knowledge in the grave whither thou hastenest."

There are many practical thoughts suggested by this view of the shortness of time, well suited to inspire earnestness of life. When we sit down and consider how soon our work will be done, how soon the wrinkles and gray hairs and trembling hand and bowed form of age will be the heritage of those who are now young—are we not aroused to diligence? Does it not seem that there is not a moment to spare, or an opportunity to be lost. It is a solemn truth that there is no time in this world but to do our duty. If we enter into the deep significance of life; if we perceive its vast possibilities the call of duty will sound so imperiously in our ears, that we shall find no place or time for idleness.



We would not have these statements taken in a narrow sense, such as would make life servile, and exclude seasons of rest and amusement. These are essential to the continuance of life and vigor. Whatever prepares us for duty is as obligatory upon us as duty itself. It is only when our seasons of rest spread out into a life of slothfulness and our amusements degenerate into voluptuousness, being a waste of time, opportunities and means of usefulness, that they become sinful. All our leisure moments and recreations should be kept subservient to the grand purposes of intellectual and spiritual life. "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

Earnestness of purpose, energy of character never fails to win admiration and respect. Even though we think men in error and engaged in a bad cause, yet we like to see them in earnest. We honor them, not for their error, but for their sincerity and zeal. It is true, earnestness does sometimes

run into haste, rashness and fanaticism. But even then it is more to be admired, and less injurious to the world than cold indifference to duty. Who has not more respect for the wildest fanatic, than for the half-hearted, drowsy professor of some true principle to which he does not do his duty. We love most the man who is earnest in defending truth and right. Next to him we love the man who is earnest and self-sacrificing in defending what we deem to be error. But we despise the man who seems to be ashamed of his principles, or to care nothing for them, and make no effort to promote them. How despicable does any sect or party appear to the world if its friends are cold and indifferent to its prosperity, and permit it to languish and die. Truth oftener suffers in this way than in any other.

We wish here to refer again to one thought, already alluded to in this chapter. We desire to impress upon the minds of the young the importance of earnestness in the improvement of their opportunities. If they

- are not watchful of these and determined to make the most of them, much of their lives will run to waste. Indeed, human life is little else than a series of splendid opportunities,—opportunities to do, and to receive good. There is no place or condition which does not afford them some opportunities to bless and to be blessed, if they are watching for them, and are ready to improve them. And remember, young friends, that opportunities are all that your Heavenly Father will ever give you. He will not force his bounties and blessings upon you. He will provide them in overflowing abundance and give you opportunities to appropriate them. But your eyes must be open to see them. Your hands must be active to lay hold upon them. You must receive them, and use them with sincere gratitude and earnest determination. You cannot conceive how great your improvement and happiness will be, if agreeable to the thought of inspiration, you are ever watchful and earnest to receive into your minds and

hearts the expressions of divine wisdom and love.

If you review the events of a day or a year, you will find that many of them might have been coined into knowledge for the mind, virtue for the heart, and happiness to bless the life, which, by your want of energy and zeal, have been permitted to run to waste. Here was an opportunity to have entered an open door that led into the temple of learning or religion. But not being aroused to the worth of the opportunity, you failed to go in at the proper time, the door was closed against you, and your succeeding life has been impoverished by the neglect. Or there was an opportunity to have done a noble work, to have uttered a brave, true word for God and man; to have exhibited a magnanimous spirit, that would have gone a blessing through society, and possibly down the ages to distant time. But you were not in earnest; your convictions were not positive and ardent; you neglected the glorious privilege,

and it was lost to yourselves and to the world forever.

These opportunities come and are lost, alike to communities and to individuals. How often in the history of the world, has God given nations glorious opportunities to establish themselves on an immutable foundation. He has held out to them the privilege of leading in the civilization and religion of mankind. But they have failed for want of earnestness in the national life. There has not been clearness, depth and fervor of conviction equal to the crisis. Such an opportunity was lost to the Hebrew nation, because its early inspiration was permitted to die in their external forms. An opportunity to establish on this Continent an empire based on the broadest principles of liberty and justice, was measurably lost by the founders of our republic because their faith in freedom was not intense enough to withstand the temptation to betray it. The church of Christ has also sometimes neg-

lected glorious opportunities because her faith was cold and dead.

But the individual life is a far more impressive illustration of the need of earnestness in improving opportunities. Often is the whole course, character and condition of a person changed by the neglect or improvement of a single opportunity. Here are two young persons with equal endowments and privileges. Parents say to them, It is our desire that you should acquire a thorough education. We have the means, and if you will accept it, we will give you the opportunity to go through the academy and the college. Here is a crisis in these young people's lives. But one is full of energy and earnestness, improves the privilege, and a course of honor and increasing usefulness opens before him. But the other is indolent, lacks energy and force of character. The work seems too great for him and he gives it up,—throws away the opportunity, and a life of ignorance,—perhaps of poverty and shame is lived. This difference simply ex-

presses the results of earnestness and indolence.

Many young people go out into life from respectable and virtuous families, having great advantages to give them, what is called "a good start in the world." But whether they succeed or not depends greatly upon whether they have force of character enough to make a right use of these early advantages. If they are sufficiently in earnest to do the work of life, they will succeed. But if they are dull and stupid, drones in the hive, they can expect nothing but failure. No respectability or wealth of family can hold them up. Remember, young men and women, that it is your own energy, your own force of will and determination of purpose that must give you success in life. Your own right hand must, under God, carve out your destiny. When you get out into the hurry and struggles of the world, the question will not be, Did you come from a high or a low family? All that men will want to know of you is, Are you efficient? Can we trust you? Have

you ability and will to serve in any useful capacity? Some of you may begin life in favorable or unfavorable circumstances. But you may be sure these considerations will not long determine your reputations. You may be able to wear a fine coat, or obliged to wear a coarse one. But this is not the question with sensible people. The essential point is, How well are you doing with the means, the opportunities you have? Are you trying to make the most of your life, such as it is—to do all you can for yourselves and for the world?

These thoughts suggest another view of the subject. Earnestness is indispensable to your success in life, because without it you can not have self-respect. Indifference to our convictions of duty naturally and almost necessarily, resolves itself into open and persistent transgression. We cannot convince ourselves that it is less criminal to neglect what we know to be right, than to do what we know to be wrong. How then, can you respect yourselves, if your own



hearts constantly condemn you for letting life's hours run to waste, and permitting its opportunities to be lost, simply because you are too indolent to improve them? It is impossible that you should have confidence in your own principles, or respect for your own characters while living such a life. Every squandered moment and opportunity leaves upon your characters the rust and mildew of insincerity and duplicity. "By a little more sleep and a little more slumber, and a little more folding the hands to sleep does poverty of body and soul come upon us." I went by the field of the slothful, and lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. The slothful man saith, There is a lion in the way; a lion is in the streets. As the door turneth upon his hinges, so doth the slothful upon his bed. The slothful hideth his hand in his bosom; it grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth." How life-like is this picture of the irresolution, dilapidation and

stupidity of the indolent person. We blush to know that our humanity can ever present so forlorn an appearance. Yet this is but a vivid coloring of the irresolution, indifference and neglect of too many individuals, sects and parties. Their fields are all grown over with thorns, and their stone walls are broken down, because they have not earnestness sufficient to keep them in good condition.

Earnestness implies faith. There are people who cannot be in earnest because their minds are confused with doubt and fear. You must believe in something with all your might before your hearts will burn with zeal, and your hands be ready to every good work. Our political parties in order to arouse the people for an enthusiastic campaign, must first meet in convention and adopt their "platform." Then they have a watchword, a rallying cry,—something on which to make an issue. We do not believe a political party without a platform could have an existence,—much less rise to su-

premacy, in this country. It is thus with the churches. We hear much said against creeds. It is nevertheless true, that a creedless church is an impossibility. If men are organized into a religious body, they must have some religious belief. If they have not, they have no foundation, no cohesive, inspiring principle, and they will soon lose their interest and crumble to pieces.

This truth is profusely illustrated in the history of ecclesiastical bodies in this country. Those churches which have the most positive, well-defined and even rigid creeds are the ones that have ever shown the most life, earnestness and zeal. While others, with equal advantages of wealth, learning and social position, but not representing definite, positive, religious ideas and convictions have been proud, cold, indifferent; doing little to enlarge their borders, and steadily dwindling away. This has not been the result of the peculiar doctrines or opinions of these sects,—of *what* they have be-

lieved, so much as of the power of belief itself. Deep, living faith in any idea or principle will inspire earnestness in promoting it. Nothing else will inspire a lively interest in it. But if faith inspires earnestness, so does earnestness inspire faith. If we practice faithfully our convictions, even though at first they are wavering, they will deepen as we go forward. It is said that Abraham's "faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect." Indeed, we cannot believe in the highest sense until we have experienced and fairly tested the operation of a principle. But if we bravely go forward in the light we have, greater light will dawn upon us. On the other hand, if we trifle with our present convictions they will grow weaker. If we do not act on the faith we have, we shall soon have none. One talent faithfully used secures the Lord's approval, and the promise of others. But any number of talents hid in a napkin will finally be taken from us. We perceive then, how essential earnestness is, to the growth

of substantial character. The young cannot develop sterling qualities without it. They cannot have confidence in themselves, nor respect for their own attainments until they know they are doing all in their power to elevate themselves and others.

Earnestness is not only indispensable to self-respect, but without it we cannot win the respect of others. If we cannot respect ourselves while living an idle, aimless life, how can others respect us? If we are not enthusiastic in our own cause, how can we inspire the enthusiasm of others,—how enlist them in our work,—how make them believe we are sincere and determined to carry our point? If our own principles or party or church are not of enough importance to us to make us earnest in their support, why should other people trouble themselves about them?

Applying this principle to our personal interests, if we are dull and stupid in the work we are doing, if we do not half attend to our business, it makes little difference

what it is, whether we are students in the academy or college, or clerks in the store, or apprentices in the mechanics' shop, or laborers upon the soil,—we cannot expect the help and encouragement of others, if we do not put forth sufficient energy to inspire their confidence. But let our calling be ever so humble, and our lot ever so lowly, if men see we are determined to do the best we can for ourselves and for the world, we shall have their respect and sympathy. If we are energetic and earnest, they will have hope for us, that we shall rise out of our disadvantages and overcome our imperfections. You may tell me, that a young man or woman has great purity and worth of character, and you at once inspire my hope. I feel that a good foundation has been laid, a right start made, but I am not sure that all the elements of success are possessed. You may tell me that a young person has a brilliant, or a strong mind, and thinks much, and deeply studies, and reasons profoundly, and though I may be convinced that

the elements of greatness are possessed, yet I am not certain that they will combine and harmonize in a practical form. You may assure me, that with these essential qualities, is blended the most gentle humility and pliant teachableness, but before I can be sure the character will unfold into the best type of manliness and womanliness, I want to know if it has executive power, positive qualities that can put forth irresistible energy to execute its purpose,—that can be aroused to earnestness when a great crisis demands its efforts. Can it do whatsoever it finds to do with its might? Is it capable of that undoubting faith which throws the whole heart into its work, and concentrates all the faculties and powers of the soul upon the work in hand?

It is necessary that the young be characterized by such earnestness, not only that they may win self-respect and the confidence of others, but that they may be able to do the work of life. Only by the most persistent endeavors can they do the best thing for

themselves, and be the power for good, they ought to be in the world. There is a work to be done, a great and glorious work assigned each one of them by their Heavenly Father. In their own natures, in their intellectual, moral and spiritual endowments, in their innumerable opportunities he has furnished them with the materials to raise to his glory, by the aid of his grace, a temple of holiness, a consecrated altar whereon are laid the offerings of wisdom, virtue and love.

If it is your intention, my young friends, to make your characters what they ought to be; what God requires you to make them, the strong hold of moral independence and the sanctuary of truth and love,—you must not wait for others to work for you; you must not wait for God himself to do your duty, and work out your own salvation. You must arise early in the morning of life, and until its latest hours toil, earnestly toil for knowledge, virtue and spiritual life. Whatever your hands find to do you must



perform cheerfully and diligently. Train yourselves to engage your whole heart in the work before you. Remember that your highest wisdom in this world is to use thankfully present comforts, and to perform faithfully present duties. Whatever you regard as right, or incumbent on you for the benefit of yourselves, your families, your church, your country or the world, according to your rank, station, talents and means, you ought to set about without delay, and pursue it without remissness. You ought not to yield to discouragement or weariness because of opposition, difficulties or hardship. Redeem your time, as those who realize that they are hastening to the grave where all opportunities of this kind will be passed, "where there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom." Whether engaged in study or labor; whether at work for yourselves or others, whether seeking wealth or learning or fame, be diligent, be faithful, be earnest, be persistent unto the end. In no other way can you win the victory. "Be thou

faithful unto death and I will give thee the crown of life." Nothing but indomitable energy and perseverance will give you strength to walk in the pathway that leads from youth to heaven. Only those who run and are not weary, walk and are not faint, renew their strength and mount up on wings like eagles. The gates of Paradise swing open to those only who seek to enter in.

Perhaps the considerations urged in this chapter should be modified by admonitions against uncontrolled, aimless enthusiasm or fanaticism. It is not to be denied, as we have before intimated, that earnestness tends, with some, to lawlessness; to inconsiderate, random expenditures of strength and effort. But such is a waste of life. Self-control, calm, deliberate, well-directed action, is the only sure foundation of character. It is an attainment, without which the young have no safe reliance, no trustworthy guide through life. The voice of heavenly wisdom calls to them, "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues

of life." Or in other words, control thy thoughts, dispositions and purposes, let them be under the direction of reason and right.

If the young do not early gain this mastery over the mind, their lives will be worth little to themselves or to the world, even though they should be ever so earnest in whatever they undertake. A watch, in order to work well, must be perfectly balanced. Every wheel must turn uniformly, perform a prescribed number of revolutions in a specified time and circle. In its motion, size, place and power, it must correspond with all the other parts of the watch. Thus should it be with the mind. Such regularity of action is not inconsistent with earnestness. Indeed, it is what will prevent earnestness from degenerating into frenzy or fanaticism. The mind must be under control, or it can do nothing useful. The person who cannot govern himself is of no benefit to the world. He has no weight of character, no power, no importance in society. He is like a tempest tost ship,—like a

magazine, liable to be blown to atoms if a spark falls in the wrong place. As the little specks of sparkling gold that lie scattered in the earth and mixed with useless dust, must be gathered up and fused into one pure, solid mass, which has weight and worth, so these sparkling jewels of intellect which are permitted to fly, as it were, into atoms, and are as light as dross, must be collected into one, clear, deep current of thought, and there will be found enough of them in almost every brain to make an impression for good on the destiny of humanity.

Who has not, at some time in his life, in passing through a wild region of country, come upon a splendid water-fall concealed perhaps in leafy woods or deep chasms? There the river, year after year, pours down its majestic flood, roaring, rushing in wild confusion. It has *power* enough to carry mills, factories and engines, and to give thousands of busy hands employment. All that is needed is a little skill in controlling

and directing it. But for the want of this, it rushes on, making music for the birds, and a home for the fishes, amusing the spectator with the sight of its spray, as it dashes over the rocks, but serving no more useful purpose. It is thus with many minds. They roar and dash and foam as the water does, now splurging against the rocks, now leaping off some wild precipice, but all to no purpose, with no definite design, with no good effect. When we have gazed and listened until we are bewildered and stunned, we turn away and realize the sweetness of silence. Such is fanaticism. It does no good. It wastes its own powers, destroys itself and injures others. And it is only against such wild, ungoverned action that we warn the young. We would not abate true zeal. We would not cramp their ardent feelings by arbitrary rules. We would only direct them in the channels of reason and right.

It would be proper to close this chapter by directing attention to various important

subjects on which the young should be especially in earnest. But many of these have been implied in what we have already written, and to notice them separately would too much extend this part of our theme. But as comprehending every duty you owe to yourselves, to men, or to God, permit us to urge you, young readers, to be in earnest in seeking to know the spirit and the power of "pure and undefiled religion," in striving to become characteristically the children of God, and the followers of the Savior. Whatever should be done to prepare you for this, do it with your might. Turn from sin and truly repent of it. Search the Scriptures, for in them you have eternal life. Where-withal shall the young cleanse their way, but by taking heed thereto according to the word of God? "Pray without ceasing" that you may be guided into all truth; that your sins may be forgiven, that your hearts may be renewed. Seek for the renewing, quickening, enlightenment and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Believe on the Lord Jesus

Christ. Confess him before men. Consecrate yourselves, your time, your possessions, your opportunities to his service. In a word, strive, in all things to conform to the will of God.

Here, indeed, is laid out for you a great work. Nothing but the most intense earnestness will enable you to perform it. You cannot serve God at your convenience, with indifference and coldness. You must love him with all your hearts, or you do not love him at all. "You cannot serve God and mammon." The Savior says, He who will be my disciple, must leave all and follow me. This is the first and great commandment. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all thy heart and soul and mind and might and strength.*" You cannot obey these requirements without consecrating all your powers to religious thought and effort. This life is so short that it requires the whole of it to elevate our minds into sympathy and fellowship with God and heavenly things. This is the view taken of it in the Bible. We are

commanded to do whatever our hands find to do, with our might, because "there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither we are hastening." "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light,"—"not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." From all points of view, as reflected in the mirror of revelation, human life appears, as the poet describes it, "earnest, real." It is the field where we are to work out our own salvation from error and sin, and "sanctify the Lord God in our hearts."

Let the young arise early in the morning of life, and toil, earnestly toil, until its latest hour for personal improvement, for the good of mankind, for the glory of God.



## V.

### LOVE.

**T**HERE is something grand and majestic in the appearance of the sturdy trunk of the forest tree. There it stands erect, immovable, firmly bound together by a tight covering of bark, and deeply rooted in the earth. It seems to have a solid, independent life of its own. It does not rest upon other trees, or even lean towards them for support. It is full of vital forces, coursing their way through unobstructed channels to every part, giving it firmness, strength and life, making it one of nature's most expressive emblems of health, vigor and durability.

And yet, are we sure that the trunk possesses this beauty in itself alone? Let us strip it of those strong boughs that branch

out of it a few feet above the earth, and reach forth to interlock with other boughs; let us sweep away all those tender, quivering twigs and leaves and buds that crown it and make above our heads a field of waving verdure and beauty, and would the trunk thus bare and dry, shooting like an arrow into the air, be pleasing to our view? Would a whole forest of them adorn and beautify the earth? Would they not rather appear a waste, a desolation, a solitude? We see beauty in the trunk because it is the support of a vigorous, social life above, because it is connected by its branches, with all the other trees around it. Standing alone, it withers and dies, though its roots strike deep and be large and strong. But when its rich life-currents are thrown up, and flow out into branches and green foliage, forming pleasant bowers and grateful shade, bearing delicious fruits, returning to the earth each year a fertilizing deposit, doing something for the order, beauty and wealth of the

world, then the trunk assumes its stateliness and grandeur.

It is thus with human life. When it stands alone, sends out no branches to connect it with other lives, and feels no sympathy for those around it;—when it exists as much as possible for itself, and does little or nothing for others, what is it but a dry, dead stump, repulsive to the sight and useless to the world? Only those whose lives are blended with other lives, who feel a deep and vital sympathy with humanity, develop the fullness of their nature. Without love the branches of life are all cut off. It is shorn of its strength and beauty. We may aim at purity of character, but this has primary reference to ourselves. Thoughtfulness is but self-culture. Humility is the spirit of our minds towards God. Earnestness is simply the energy of character we, as individuals, are able to put forth. But love is the bond of union between ourselves and other souls. It carries us out of ourselves and makes us recognize relations,

obligations and indebtedness to the world without. And human character cannot be perfected until it unfolds in the light of these social relations. These draw it out, and broaden its proportions, inspiring it with a generous, magnanimous spirit. The stream of each life must be supplied by streams flowing into it from all other lives, or it soon becomes low and has little refreshing for the world. Sympathy for humanity is the flowering forth of the highest self-culture, as the branches, leaves, flowers and fruits, are the development of the vital currents that flow up from the roots, through the trunk. The best moral and spiritual training, the deepest religious experiences will culminate in supreme love to God, and in love to our neighbors as to ourselves.

It is on account of the great importance of this sentiment in the formation and perfection of human character that we count it as one of the steps in the pathway from youth to heaven. We assure the young that it is indeed the spirit of the heavenly

life, the foretaste of its blessedness. We place it next after earnestness because we would have the enthusiasm of their lives the earnestness of love. We place it next before religion, because it is its pervading spirit and naturally unfolds into the conscious, religious life.

Love has a two-fold development,—one toward God, in a life of devout spirituality; and one toward man in a life of charity, benevolence and heart-felt sympathy for our fellow-beings. It is of its humane spirit and works that we shall speak to the young in this chapter. We wish to urge upon young men and women the importance, and even necessity, of their identifying their lives with the interests of humanity, as the indispensable condition of the perfection of their own characters. Whenever you refuse any rightful claim of humanity, you close up one of the fountains of your own life and blessedness.

You should never forget, what the gospel

uniformly teaches, and is well expressed by the poet when he says,—

“All are but parts of one stupendous whole.”

Society is one organized form or body, composed of individuals, families, communities and classes. No person can claim absolute independence and completeness by himself. Each one of you occupies a functional place, where you are called to work for the common good. You are incorporated into the social body and you cannot be cut off from it, or refuse to perform your part, without injury to the whole system.

The interests of humanity demand a combination of the various gifts of all men. These make a perfect community or society when harmoniously blended. As each individual receives a peculiar type of character, and is placed as a member, and is assigned a particular office in the one body of humanity, so there is a common law to govern, and a common purpose to fulfill the life of each. There is a central, determining purpose in human life, and every human being

has a place to fill, and a work to do in its economy. To one is given knowledge, the directing mind, to another the inspiring utterance, the eloquent tongue, to another, the loving, trusting heart; and to another the working hand. "All members have not the same office," but all combine to make the perfect body. In this variety of endowments and unity of purpose, *we* see a perfect humanity,—a body with a living spirit, a central soul, a vital force, animating, attracting, harmonizing all its parts; weaving them together in mutual dependence and sympathy.

You perceive, then, that love is the life-principle of society, as the hidden currents of the trunk are the life-principle of the tree. What is *seen* in the natural world, is *felt* in the social world. In all the influences you exert, or which are exerted upon you, God would have the harmony of spirit that pervades the arrangements of the outer world. All the unity and beauty of the material creation may be more than equaled

in the world of thought and feeling. When the divine power of love animates the hearts of men it centers them upon the single purpose of doing good, imparting blessings to all whom they can reach. There may be as great variety of operation in the soul, as there is of forms in nature ; but as all natural forms combine around a common plan and purpose, and produce one harmonious, though diversified whole, so love is a central attraction in the moral universe uniting all our faculties, aims and desires, upon the general welfare of mankind.

True love is not merely a specific attachment, but a radical tendency of the heart. It is a uniform, spontaneous flow of the soul, not dependent on personal affections, associations or interests, but its action is constant, impartial and unlimited. It is the sympathy of our spirits with humanity. It recognizes the divine in human life, and admits us into sweet fellowship with all kindred beings. It is the electric current which communicates our mutual joys and



sorrows, awakens gratitude for the happiness of others, thrills us with delight at the sound of cheerful voices swelling from glad hearts. Love is the bond of a common nature, a uniting, reconciling power in the moral and spiritual world.

It is difficult to describe a sentiment, an emotion. We *feel* it, but cannot *express* it. Our ideas of it must be formed, in a great degree, from the works it prompts. Hatred, fear, avarice and lust appear to us in the character of their works. So our ideas of love come from its "perfect works." It is said that there is no word in our language which fully expresses it, and being without an adequate language, its works become the hieroglyphics to record its history. And even these are few and imperfect. The life of our Savior affords us more and better illustrations than can be found in human history. When we consider his treatment of obstinate and wilful unbelief on the part of both open enemies and professed friends, we learn that one trait of love is to bear

patiently and meekly with those who oppose themselves to the truth; who are hard of heart and dull of perception. It is able to see the good qualities that exist in human character with bad ones. It can make just allowance for all disadvantages in the circumstances of the unbelieving and sinful. It can be forbearing, generous and just even to enemies. And its only disposition or feeling towards them is the desire to convince them of the truth and convert them to righteousness.

Another characteristic of this spirit was exhibited by the Savior on his way to crucifixion. Priests and rulers mocked and spit upon him. He was suffering intense agony of mind. Yet in the midst of these sufferings he forgot himself, was moved with pity for his friends, and turning to those who followed him mourning, said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but for your children and for yourselves." As here illustrated, love is self-forgetting, self-renouncing in its anxiety for the well-being of others. It can

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THE OTHER CHARACTERISTICS OF LOVE ARE expressed by the Father in his prayer on the cross for the forgiveness of his murderers. These will truly love men never feel the spirit of retaliation, but desire to forget and forgive their injuries. They are also inclined to attribute their errors and crimes to ignorance or to wrong motives, honestly cherished. They do not indeed seek to be blind to the truth, but they make all possible allowances for mistakes, and give due weight to all palliative circumstances. They never seek for wrong intentions, or imagine their existence. Love has faith in human nature. Deceived and perverted as it is, it will not believe that it is wholly bad, that it is un-sound at the core, inherently corrupt. With

the Savior it attributes its crimes to a want of knowledge, to perverted tastes, habits and false instructions. Holy love, such as the spirit of God inspires in the heart, can perceive how dark and dreary the soul is before the quickening spirit enters it,—dark and dreary, not because there is no latent life and goodness in it, but because they have not been vitalized and called out, because, like the unfed body and the uncultivated earth its forces lie dormant. These considerations incline it to tenderness of judgment, and cause it to delight more in fostering virtue than in censuring vice. For the worst deeds it admits every excuse. It is slow to attribute malignity to the human heart. It “suffereth long and is kind.” “It envieth not; it boasteth not.” It is not proud, passionate or suspecting. “It doth not behave itself unseemly.” “It rejoiceth in the truth.” It is forbearing, long suffering, confiding, hopeful, patient, full of faith, and good works, “without partiality, and without hypocrisy.” It is the bond of per-

fectness, the fulfillment of the law, and one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit. It is the soul of whatever is great and good, whether intellectual, practical or spiritual excellence. It is divine and immortal.

Such is love, as seen in the light of our best analysis, and as exemplified in the life of the Son of God. We have dwelt at length upon its nature that we might open the hearts of the young to its spirit, before we called them forth to do its works. It is delightful to look into the very heart of love, and feel its gentle breathings stealing in upon our hearts, subduing all their asperities, filling them with sweet and tender emotions, making them serene and peaceful. O, my young readers, let me urge you to drink often at this fountain of life. Meditate upon the pure and warm affections that flow responsive from heart to heart; ponder the unselfish, untiring and blessed ministries which love inspires, and think of all the sorrow it relieves, and the joy it awakens, until your souls are fired to go out and do its

works. Let the purity of your hearts catch the soft, gentle glow of love and be subdued into tenderness and compassion. Let your hours of study and seasons of thoughtfulness be devoted to devising ways for the relief of the great suffering heart of humanity. Let your humility and acts of devotion before God be inspired with confidence and hope by the trustful spirit of love. And let your earnestness be the zeal to do good which love inspires.

We wish now to urge you to engage earnestly in the appropriate works of love. The clearest presentation of your duty to perform these, you will find in their simple statement. What then are the natural, the legitimate works of love?

First, we say that love is a *reformatory power*, a *progressive spirit*. You cannot have thought much upon the state of society, or examined closely the elements that are at work in it, without having discovered two strong currents in its life, setting in opposite directions. One is a current of grossness,

opposing all progress in society, all changes in political and religious thought or institutions. It is set against every movement for freedom, temperance, the elevation of woman, the abolition of aristocratic distinctions among men, arbitrary and unjust institutions, war, dueling and similar forms of grossness. Of course, we do not refer to that healthful and salutary conservatism which gathers up and cherishes the truths that lie scattered through all past ages. We need not say that we have no sympathy with that insane, destructive, irreverent spirit which pours contempt upon everything old, not sparing even the word of God. Let the young be admonished that however much this spirit may boast of love, there is not one of its elements in it. It contains the gall of bitterness, and when fully developed it annihilates God, disorganizes his government, obliterates moral distinctions, and leaves man without soul, duty or destiny. But there is in society a gross disposition to worship the dead past; to hold on stub-

bornly and blindly to everything old, and to reject everything new. It is against this we warn the young. Be assured, young friends, that so wicked a world as our's is, may be improved. Where there is so much ignorance and error and crime and suffering, progress is possible. There has been advancement in all past ages, in the arts and sciences, in social life, in the laws and institutions of nations, and in religious ideas. And you may be certain there will be farther advancement. Human governments are not yet so just or liberal or well established that they can be made no better. We have not yet arrived at a perfect understanding of the Bible. It will modify our creeds and revise our moral codes more and more. And this is what we mean when we say that love is a reformatory power. It believes in progress. It hopes and labors for a better condition of humanity. It calls continually for more light, and urges men to make improvement by assuring them of their capacity for progress.



Now which of these tendencies do the young desire to follow? Will you join the friends or the foes of mankind? Will you be found in the company of the living, progressive spirits of our age; those who are toiling to bring in a better era, whose hearts are all warm with love for man and who are sacrificing and praying for his salvation? Or, will you take sides with the foes of society, and give pride, oppression, intemperance and grossness your support? We call on the young to awake, open their hearts to the divine spirit of love, and join the advancing army in the world's progress. Let every benevolent reform have your hearty support. Do all you can to help the world out of its lost condition. Give it your time, your labor, your wealth, your prayers. These you will give, if your hearts are warm with the love of God.

We observe in the second place, that love delights in deeds of charity, in administering relief to the suffering. "Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have

need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" Here we have the doctrine of practical charity, of benevolent works, as the evidence and measure of God's love in the soul. Men will be active in relieving the wants of the needy, in distributing their means among the suffering, to the extent their hearts are filled with the spirit of God, in the degree they are truly religious.

If you do good with what you possess, you will give men a very convincing proof that you love both God and them. The benevolent man always gets credit for being as good as he is. It *costs* too much to put *his* religion on for a cloak. The hypocrite seeks a cheaper, a less self-sacrificing religion to cover up his iniquity. Many abound in religious professions, in ceremonies and doctrines, who are not willing to do anything to help a suffering world, who never seem to think that sheltering the homeless, feeding the hungry and clothing the naked is a part of their duty as Christians. Let no young per-

sons understand us, as even intimating that it is not their duty to make a public profession of religion, or that they may innocently neglect the outward forms and observances of religion. Christ requires these of you. They are a part of his religion. We cannot be his followers unless we observe them. But they are no more, taken alone, than the dry trunk of the tree without limbs, foliage and fruit. They will not be accepted in the place of love, and if they do not lead to a life of Christian charity, they fail of their legitimate effect upon the heart. Remember this, young men and women, and never attempt to substitute *profession* for *practice*, *belief* for *love*. They go well together, but bring ruin upon the soul that separates them. It was of ceremonial and moral duties that our Savior said, "These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone."

You may learn this lesson of practical charity by considering the divine benevolence. It does not indeed always seek present and personal gratification, but on a broad

and generous scale, by various agencies, it steadily pursues one grand, benevolent aim, resulting in the permanent welfare of all men. All the operations of divine providence point to this result. Behold the profusion of God's blessings. How richly he provides for all. Look at the ripe harvests and the full garner. Consider our domestic and social blessings. What evident tokens of divine goodness are seen in all the works of nature,—in the construction of our bodies, in the constitution of our minds, in every department of human experience. There is no narrowness or selfishness to be learned from the lesson of God's providence. He holds everything tributary to our welfare. He keeps nothing from us that is needful for our good. "He is kind unto the unthankful and the evil, and sendeth his rain upon the just and the unjust." While he has in his possession all the treasures of creation and may do with them as he pleases, he holds them for our benefit. His claim upon them is higher than our's *can* be, yet he counts

them, as it were, not his own, but his children's. He has no personal glory to promote, by his works, that he does not attain through the good of his rational offspring. He finds his own felicity, and seeks his own glory, in the felicity and the glory of his children.

Such are the practical developments of God's love, in his dealings with men. And how can this love dwell in our hearts when we turn away from the needy, giving them no help. God requires of us, only what *he* does. We are required to be merciful *as* our Father in heaven is merciful. As he imparts his blessings as long as there is in human need, a demand for them, so he requires us to hold whatever we have in readiness to respond to the cry of suffering. The young man who came to the Savior inquiring what good thing he should do to inherit eternal life, was told to sell all that he had and give to the poor, and he should have treasure in heaven.

As you go out into the world, young

friends, you will find too little of this benevolence practiced among men. You will generally find them living selfishly, and often sordidly. There are noble exceptions. Generous, unselfish, Christian hearts will be met whose love will be a benediction. But it is nevertheless true that this is a selfish, gross, money-loving age, in which men live to accumulate treasures and hold them proudly as their own. Most men feel insulted, if not robbed, when told that others have claims upon their treasures. But this is, in the highest sense, true. The richest man on earth does not own a dollar, or a foot of land that he has a right to say is absolutely his own. He may keep it in his possession until he meets those whom it will benefit more, and then their's is the greater claim. By the most sacred obligations known to our hearts, even those growing out of God's infinite love to us, he is bound to give it up.

We hope the young will not turn from these obligations lightly. We know they are not grounded in human wisdom. We

know they are foolishness to the spirit and practice of the world. But we do most sincerely believe they grow out of the religion of Jesus Christ. Let us read again the words of the loving disciple,—Whoso has this world's goods,—he does not say how little or much,—whoso hath any amount of this world's goods, and withholdeth it from his more needy brother, hath not the love of God in his soul. We are required to share our blessings with those around us, to love our neighbor as ourselves, and to do by others as we would be done by.

It has been said that an application of this doctrine would make every one poor. The objection simply reverses the truth. It would make every one rich. God has given enough for all. Many people have too much for their own and other's good. This is the reason so many have not enough. If one man has a vast estate, some other man must be without any estate, for God has not provided millions for every man. The rich and poor come from an unequal distribution of

Heaven's bounties. Your prayer should be, "Give me neither poverty or riches." And your aim should be, not to grasp every advantage and possession, but rather to use your opportunities and means to alleviate suffering and improve the condition of the race. The occasions for doing benevolent works are innumerable. In every community there are homeless, fatherless, motherless, friendless children; there are the aged, the sick, the helpless. There are the intemperate, the idle, the reckless, and their miserable families. There are benevolent institutions and enterprises which deserve your support. Schools, colleges, churches depend on the patronage of the people, both old and young, for their life and usefulness. The Bible must be circulated, books, tracts and papers distributed, the gospel preached, the Sabbath School sustained, missionaries sent "into all the world," and every means used to enlighten, elevate and save sinful, lost humanity.

Here is a broad field for Christian effort.



It devolves upon the young men and women of this, and every generation and country to engage in these works. It is your solemn duty and glorious privilege to do more and better for humanity than the former generations have done. You have more materials to work with. You have clearer light to guide you. You have many more encouragements and helps in every department of benevolent labor. We are certain that in no previous age has the plea of love been so generally responded to. Countless benevolent institutions are now receiving the large gifts and endowments of the rich. There are associations for the relief of every species of misfortune, and to save from every form of crime. The world is learning more and more to honor its philanthropists and reformers. If the young catch the spirit of Christian benevolence, now becoming more and more a power in society, and go forth to do its works, how great may be the progress of the next half century. And let them not think that the work of Christian love is simply on

the surface of society. Love is indeed a reformatory power, the spirit of progress. It does indeed relieve the temporal necessities of men, and do its utmost to sustain all benevolent institutions. But if the "love of God has been shed abroad in your hearts," it will teach you that to work upon the surface is not enough. Men's hearts, their inmost spiritual life, must be regenerated and sanctified by the indwelling of divine love. And in all you do for the relief of their outward wants, you will ever keep in mind their spiritual necessities. You will labor and pray that the grace of God may take effect in their souls. And in your own experience, you will not be satisfied until love rises above a passion or a sentiment, and becomes in your hearts a principle of renewing life, a sacred, holy affection for God and for men. "Let love do her perfect work."

## VI.

### RELIGION.

**W**E have all been told, if we have not observed, how the flowers, growing in the dark, reach up after the light. If there is an aperture or crevice where its rays can steal in, they will turn their heads towards it, and apparently rejoice in its faintest beams. You may plant beside them other flowers, but they will not turn towards them, or intertwine their stems and foliage, until they are permitted to see the sunshine. You may water their roots, and cultivate them with ceaseless care, but they will not put on their bright colors, or send forth their fragrance, until they are permitted to kiss the beams of the morning, and sit arrayed in the glory of the noonday. Give them the sunshine, let them

look up into glowing heavens, and they will respond to all you may do for them with increasing vigor and beauty. But only on the condition that they have free intercourse with the skies, and are allowed to commune with heaven, is the fulness of their life developed. Their varied hues and lovely tints are but the reflection of heaven's light and glory. All the elements of life and growth in the vegetable kingdom are communicated from the sun. Strike the sun out of existence, and every tree and plant and flower would die. And in proportion as its rays are withdrawn, their life is feeble and their beauty fades. Flowers, pale and drooping in the dark, trembling on a stem so brittle that the slightest touch will break it down, show us how largely their life and brilliant colors are composed of elements distilled from above.

It is thus, my young readers, with your lives. They will not unfold in all their power, perfection and beauty until the glorious light of heaven falls upon them.

While you live gross and earthly lives, while your thoughts go out chiefly to "things seen and temporal," and there is little or no communication between your souls and God, you are like flowers striving to grow in the dark. You cannot draw into your characters from the earth, or from any, or all the objects that exist upon it, the elements of true life. They exist alone in God and he must give them. Your souls must reach up towards him as the flowers turn towards the sunbeams. All your earthly culture can avail but little until it is crowned and perfected by heavenly or religious culture. Without this, your progress is like the growth of plants in cold, dark cellars. Your characters, unblest with religious instruction, and destitute of the religious spirit, even though their other attainments are great, resemble the pale, slender, brittle stem, striving almost in vain, to put forth its leaves in the dark. You can bear few of the rich fruits of rational, moral and spiritual life. You can wear few of the beauties and graces of true men and

women, until you come into conscious communion with your Heavenly Father, and are enabled to reflect in your lives the light that streams from his holy presence. Until then you abide in comparative darkness. All your other attainments rest under a cloud. They are overshadowed by the darkness that abides upon your spiritual faculties.

The religious faculties are the highest endowments of our being. They are the windows through which we may look into heaven,—the eyes with which we see the Invisible. Our other faculties open to our perception things of time and sense. But these, when used, open to our view the spiritual world. Whenever, therefore, they are darkened, the dimness must fall on all those faculties that lie beneath them, as when the sky is covered with clouds the lowly earth seems clothed in gloom. Our religious capacities are the upper stories in the temple of our being. They stand above the earth and overlook it. But our other faculties are the basement stories of our nature. They

rest upon the earth. Some of them are underground rooms, with half windows, and their light is very dim. There are indeed passage-ways by which we may ascend from these lower to the upper apartments, but if we insist on remaining below, we can have only the light that comes in through crevices, open doors and small windows.

Now the fact we wish to bring distinctly before the minds of the young in this place is,—You can never be satisfied with such a life. You can never unfold the latent powers and possibilities of your being, you can never know the purity and blessedness for which your Maker designed you, in a life overshadowed by the darkness of earthliness. As the flowers grow pale and slender in the dark, so your lives will be feeble and unfruitful without the light of God's truth and spirit shining upon them. As they seem to reach up and seek after the light, and plead for its faintest rays, so will deep, unsatisfied feelings arise in your hearts. They will pant and cry out for the Living God. In their

darkness, you will not always perceive the object of your need, will not always know that it is the absence of God from your souls, that makes them so void, restless and sad, but you will always feel that need until God fills and vitalizes your inmost life. Like the patriarch, you will cry, "O, that I knew where I might find Him, that I might come even to His seat." Like the Athenians, you will set up idol after idol to meet the exigencies of each new experience, until finally baffled and wearied you will find room for the one "to the unknown God," whom the Lord Jesus Christ alone can reveal unto you. These idols may assume the form of speculative belief or unbelief, of showy observances of outward worship, or cold neglect and contempt of devotion, of superstitious prejudices, fears and servile acts of obedience, or uncontrolled indulgence of every vicious desire and habit, yet multiply them as you will, they cannot satisfy, or give light and peace. Nothing less than the Infinite can give your souls rest. You will have



inward discontent, a painful sense of irreconciliation and need, until God by his Holy Spirit dwells in you and you in him. There must be harmony between your mind and his. Your will must be subdued to his. Your thoughts must be filled with his thoughts; your spirit pervaded by his spirit. You must humbly acknowledge him in all the experiences and works of your lives.

It may be that you, my young friend, who are now perusing these pages, are this moment feeling this spiritual discontent and longing, that you are pained with a realization of your spiritual darkness, of the alienation of your heart from the life and love of God. It may be you now feel your want of a better knowledge of his character, will and purposes, of a deeper sense of his presence with you in all the experiences of life, of a clearer consciousness of his hidden life in your souls. It may be that you are now saying to yourself, "O that I knew where I might find God, that I might come near him, feel and realize his presence with me. I am

not satisfied with myself, I long for something I do not possess; my soul is dark and void. I have striven for purity of character, and am not guilty of any great crimes in thought, word or deed; but still my sight is dim, and there must be some good beyond which I have not seen. I have thought and reasoned much, but I have not arrived at any satisfying conclusion. I have humbly and earnestly searched that I might know the truth, and sought by love to men, and sympathy with them in their trials, to fulfill my duty. Yet I am in darkness. My soul is sad. I am blind and weak. I know not the way. I fall at almost every step. I turn from right paths. I weary in the performance of duty. I want a divine Presence in my soul to warm, enlighten and inspire it. O, that I knew where the fountains of spiritual refreshing spring, that I might sit by the streams of living water."

It is with the desire to guide you in taking this step in the pathway from youth to heaven, that we devote this chapter to

"Religion." And permit us to say to you first, that this cry of the soul after God, is natural and irrepressible. It is one that has gone up from the great heart of humanity in every age and clime and condition. The question is not whether you shall recognize God, acknowledge his existence and sometimes feel your dependence upon him. This you must do, from a necessity of your nature. It is true, "the fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." But this is a depth of degradation to which nature is seldom brought in youth. It is the result of a long, hardening process of doubt, unbelief and sin. But even if you could be so foolish, so debased, as to say with your lips, or in your godless lives to the Almighty, "Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways," yet your hearts in their desolation will often turn to him with sighs and tears. They will grieve over their own wretchedness and their sadness will be the child's sobbing for the absent parent, the infant's cry to sleep upon the mother's bosom,

the prodigal's home-sickness when perishing far from the Father's house. Yes, God made the human soul in his own image. It is of great value in his sight. He will not permit it to drift out of his sight, or wholly beyond his influence. His truth and spirit often seek it in warnings, admonitions and encouragements, even in its most wayward life. There are many ties that bind the soul to God, and by some one, or more of these he holds on, even to the vilest of our race.

“ I know not where his islands lift  
Their fronded palms in air ;  
I only know I cannot drift  
Beyond his love and care.”

In the second place, permit us to admonish you not to make the mistake of thinking that you can find God in any mere, human attainments. There is no mythology or theology, no system of philosophy or learning that ever has, or ever can reveal him. We affirm this on the authority of inspiration and all human history. “ Who by searching can find out God ? ” is the echo that comes

back from all the theorizing, philosophizing, studying and struggling of men in every age. When "reason tired and blind," has sought to learn of him in the mysteries of the schools, in its own deepest institutions, and in the tokens of providence, it has been obliged finally to exclaim with the apostle, "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out."

But although your Heavenly Father has not made it possible for your finite minds to comprehend his infinity, yet he has devised a plan to make himself known, so that we may behold him with the eye of faith, and come very near to him. And here, let it be impressed upon your minds that you can see God and draw near to him in no other way than the one he has appointed. You may, indeed, see intimations of him in nature and providence. Your own hearts may call for him, but not until you look to "Him in whom dwelt all the fullness of the god-head

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bodily ;" who is "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person," can you obtain a clear and satisfying view of your Creator. Though God, in his own nature, is incomprehensible, yet he is revealed in his Son to the simplest understanding. "Through him we have access by one spirit unto the Father." He shows "us the Father and it sufficeth .us." He is "in the Father, and the Father in him." They are one in the divine elements of their life, in the divine power by which they work, in their spirit and purposes, in all their aims and efforts. "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father," are the words of our Savior. "I am the way, the truth, and the life ; no man cometh unto the Father but by me."

Here, my young friends, in Christ the Lord, the Only Begotten Son of God, and the Savior of the world, you have the response which your Heavenly Father makes to the cry of your souls for the Living God. When they exclaim with the patriarch, "O, that we knew where we might find him, that

we might come even to his seat," the gospel replies, You shall find him in Christ. You may come unto God by him. Believe on Him, follow Him, let Him be formed in you, and you will find the Father in the Son.

Here, perhaps, we ought to stop. Here, in one view, our theme is exhausted. We have reached the uppermost round in the celestial ladder. In telling you to look to Christ, believe on him, receive his spirit, obey him, we have told you all. We have taken you into the Heavenly Presence. We have led you along, step by step, in the upward pathway, until you have come, even to the seat of the Most High. There is no way that leads higher than "the Way of access unto the Father." Follow in this and it will lead you as far as it is possible for you to go. In pointing you to Christ, we have told you all that is essential to Christian faith and life. Follow him, and you do every thing. Follow him and your heaven begins below. You walk with God on earth, are clothed with angel purity even here amidst

the dust that soils the garments of this world.

But O, how far above the loftiest human excellence is this divine ideal of life. Like the sun in heaven, bright and glorious, it rises far above us, but we cannot reach it. It is not in man alone to live this divine life. It is not in human wisdom to conceive it, or in human strength to attain unto it. God has given us the ideal in the gospel of his Son. We can live in its light, behold its glory, as we do the glory of the sun, but by our own unaided powers, it is no more in us to reach it, than to ascend to the orb of day.

Hence, there are other thoughts, clustering around this central thought of the gospel, which it is important you should receive into your religious experience. While none of them, like faith in Christ, are, by themselves, indispensable to salvation ; while they all, in relation to him, occupy a subordinate place, yet by this relation to him, they become essential to the development of our religious life, as means to an end. If you are not able,



by your own, unaided wisdom and strength, to rise into fellowship with Christ, then the means which God has provided to bring you to him are as indispensable as Christ himself. If you were perishing for food, and at a distance from you were an abundance to satisfy your wants, but only one way or one method for you to reach it, would not the going in that way, or by that method, be as indispensable as the food itself? In a spiritual sense, far beyond you is Christ, the only life-giving food and drink for your souls. He is "the bread of God which cometh down from heaven and giveth life to the world." He is "the living water springing up" in the believing soul "unto everlasting life." Partake of him and you will never hunger, never thirst again. But, "except in a spiritual sense," you eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man you have no life in you, you shall not see life, the wrath of God abideth on you, you will die in your sins."

The great question for you to decide

at this point, is, How are you to reach this spiritual food? How are you to come to Christ so as to find rest to your souls, have his life abiding in you, and be brought by him unto the Father?

God has appointed the means as well as the end. These means you must use, or you cannot reach the end. As our theme implies, there are steps in the pathway that leads up from youth to heaven, and every one of them must be taken in following Christ, before we reach the glorious abode of the Father.

There is harmony and beauty in the Christian plan of salvation. The scheme seems to unfold out of the progressive developments of God's eternal purpose. There are no discords in the revelations of Almighty Love. The lines of golden light that stream from the Eternal Presence upon the ages, and those that fall so sweetly upon the individual soul run in beautiful parallels. There are three dispensations or stages of progress in the religious life of the world, and there are

three in the progress of each individual soul towards Christ. At first God spoke face to face with Adam, Abraham and Moses. So now, though not in precisely the same manner or by the same means, yet as directly, he speaks to, or in the souls of men. The natural sense of right and wrong, the voice of conscience, is the voice of God. If you will take the first step towards Christ, you must listen to this voice within; you must hear this cry and call of your religious nature. Obedience to the heart's sense of duty, the quick and cheerful response to what you feel to be right, is the only condition on which you will be permitted to know anything of a true, religious experience. The humility and the purity that with child-like simplicity go where they feel they ought to go, is the starting point on the way to Christ. If at the outset, you cannot, or will not resolve to be honest in your religious investigations, to live up to the light you have, to be and do what conscience demands,

it is useless, worse,—hypocrisy,—for you to pretend to be religious.

This, then, is the first essential in Christian faith and life. Deep, earnest sincerity, such as shrinks from the thought of trifling with religion, such as draws back with pain from duplicity, coldness, indifference and carelessness must be your first experience in the Christian life. The religious attributes of your nature demand this, and if their first requirement is not promptly complied with, how can you expect to be led up higher?

It was only for a brief period that God communicated with men directly as in the earliest time. Soon, those simple communications prepared them to receive a permanent revelation. The second period, or dispensation in the world's religious life, was the Law given upon Sinai. Out of this, as a development of its latent force, and as men progressed under its instructions, in due time, were unfolded the historical, poetical and prophetic parts of the Old Testament.

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There is a parallel to this in individual experience. The second dispensation of religious life in the soul, the second step towards Christ is the reception, by faith, of the revealed word of God. Consult your natural, religious impulses, and while they will reveal religious wants, religious aspirations, they will also make you painfully conscious of natural weakness, short-sightedness and proneness to error and sin. If you are true to them, they will soon make you feel your need of a clearer light than theirs. The progress from the first, simple religious impulses of the untaught mind, to faith in God's word, is natural and necessary, if you are true to yourselves. As soon as your souls begin to hunger and thirst after righteousness they find food and drink in the Scriptures to refresh them.

Here you have the second step. If you will come to Christ in the sense of being his disciples, come unto God by him and find peace and rest in them, you must have a living faith in the word of God. You must

take it as your guide, your rule of faith and practice. It must speak to your minds as having authority. You must hide it in your hearts that you sin not against him. You must love it and make it the subject of meditation day and night. It must be the guide of your youth, the man of your counsel, the light of your eyes. You must have not only an intellectual belief of it, an intelligent, well-established conviction of its truth, but that experimental faith in it which is always inspired in the heart when it is studied "for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness.

If you go to the Scriptures merely to criticise them, if you study them with any other purpose than to be made wise unto salvation by them, your minds will be confused. You will fail of edification. You will be led into doubt and unbelief. This will be the result because there will be discord between your purpose in studying them, and the divine purpose in giving

them. If you apply the principles of one science to explain the phenomena of another, they will not work together. They make confusion. But apply the principles of each, to explain its own phenomena and all is clear. If you go to the Scriptures for an explanation of the principles or laws of natural science or of philosophy, or of art, they will be to you, what they were to many learned and refined Greeks, foolishness. They were not given for this purpose. They treat not of material, but of spiritual things, not of earthly but of heavenly things. You are reading them with a design foreign to their nature. The thought, the spirit, the purpose you are cherishing is not in them. But if you read them with a moral and spiritual purpose; if you do as Christ tells you to do, "search them because in them you have eternal life," because you find them profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness; because you desire to be "made wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus;"—in a word,

if you go to the Scriptures to be instructed in spiritual things, to have your errors removed, to be taught the truth of God, to have your hearts imbued with penitence, purified from the love of sin, and filled with the love of God, they will surely guide you to Christ. They will direct your feet in the straight and narrow path that leads to heaven.

We feel a strong desire to impress it on your minds, young readers, that you have no other safe guide, no other plain and open way to Christ, than the Scriptures. Forsake them and you will "wander in endless mazes lost." Your thoughts, your affections, your aspirations will all be wasted and wearied on fruitless speculations that cannot kindle one spark of true devotion or holy love in the soul. But if you walk in the light of God's word, it will bring you very near to him. Your minds will be familiar with his thoughts. His spirit will insinuate itself unto your hearts. You will live in a heavenly atmosphere. The whole truth of God



will not flash in upon your minds at once. But as you daily study the Bible its hidden treasures will gradually come to light, unfolding more and more of divine wisdom and love. The Scriptures were given to men progressively. First the Law, then teachers and judges under the Law, then the Psalms, the Prophets, and finally Christ and his inspired apostles and teachers. By a similar process is their light shed upon the soul. First, they present religion to us in the form of law, as a rule of duty. But as we learn to keep its precepts as a service, as obedience, higher motives and sentiments fill our minds. It was thus with the young man who went to Christ, asking what he must do to inherit eternal life. He had kept all the commandments from youth up. And by keeping them he had been made conscious of spiritual wants. "What lack I yet?" If he had not kept them;—if he had always lived a careless, disobedient life, he would not have known that he lacked anything. By obedience, the first step, the

second was made to appear. Such will be your experience. What you first do as a duty will soon become a desire for something better, a privilege. What was first a *rule*, will become a *principle* of action. You will enter deeper and deeper into the thoughts of God, be led along, step by step, until you become one with Christ, as he is one with God.

But while the Scriptures will be your guide to Christ, they will soon make you feel your need of help to understand and obey them. As human wisdom alone cannot by searching find out God to perfection, or learn his will, no more can it understand and feel the power of his revealed word. You cannot be truly interested in it, or follow its directions without the aid of divine grace, the enlightening, strengthening and quickening of the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures will open the way that leads to the Savior, if you study them, but how are you to acquire the power, or the will to walk in it? Who, or what will kindle in your hearts

the *desire* to follow Christ? Do not your own hearts testify that they do not feel this desire as they ought to feel it? Are you not conscious of coldness and indifference to his claims?

Reading the Scriptures will bring you face to face with these questions. And the Scriptures answer them. Our Savior promises to send the spirit of truth into the hearts of those who are seeking him, to guide them into all truth. We read that God will give his Holy Spirit to them who ask him for it. The work of the Spirit is to interest us in divine and heavenly things, to quicken and enlighten the soul, renew it in the likeness of God, and fill it with holy love and peace. Its fruits are "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance." The Holy Spirit, dwelling in your hearts, will make you love the study of the Scriptures, and enable you to perceive in their teachings a divine wisdom, "able to make you wise unto salvation." It will inspire

delight in prayer, make your communion with God constant and sweet. Do you, my young readers, feel a lively interest in devotion? Have you stated seasons of prayer? Do you retire into your closets every day, to commune with your Heavenly Father, in his word, and in prayer? Are you not too liable to forget this, and to shrink from the heart-searching exercise? Do you not sometimes find your hearts so cold and dead to divine things that they actually dread, and flee from, the place of prayer? This want of interest in devotion is removed by the presence of the Holy Spirit in the heart. It makes intercession for us. It inspires faith in prayer, enables us to feel its power, humbles our souls before God, fills them with the desire to draw near to him and warms them with love for him. O, young man, young woman, do you know the blessedness, have you experienced the unspeakable joy of going alone into the presence chamber of the Most High; of drawing near to God in the simple accents of filial affection, of

sitting meekly with Mary, at the Savior's feet, to tell him your needs, and to catch his responsive words?

It is by these avenues of approach that you must go to Christ. Listen to the voice of God as he speaks to you in the religious sentiments of your hearts, in his word, and by his Holy Spirit. Unceasingly call upon him in prayer. Meditate much upon religious themes. Seek the counsel and encouragement of those who are striving to walk with God. And day by day, you will have an increasing realization of the Savior's presence with you. You will arise to a new life in him, be "born again," "of the spirit," "from above," "by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever."

But you will not stop with this personal experience. "The love of God shed abroad in your hearts" will not permit you to be selfish or exclusive. If you are indeed the followers of Christ, you will love not only him but his. The fellowship of believing souls will be prized and

improved. The sabbath, the sanctuary, the sabbath school, the conference, and prayer meeting, and church, will all be valued as means of personal growth in grace, and of religious influence. The sentiment of your hearts will be,—

“O happy day that fixed my choice.  
On thee, my Savior and my God,  
Well may this growing heart rejoice,  
And tell its raptures all abroad.”

When you attain unto the new life in Christ, feel a nearness to him, a oneness with him, you will esteem it no less a privilege than a duty to make this fellowship known by an open profession of your faith in him. You will delight in observing “all things whatsoever he has said unto you.” In imitation of his example, and in company with his true followers of every age, you will seek to fulfil all righteousness. You will not delay to take upon yourselves the solemn baptismal vows which will be to you at once the sign and seal of your faith, love and devotion, and the symbol of

spiritual cleansing. You will improve each opportunity to eat and drink at the Table of your Lord, and do it with warmer affection and greater delight than glows in your hearts when sitting with your best earthly friends. You will fully join yourselves with the company of his open followers, as a pledge of fervent love to him, for their encouragement, and for your own strengthening. In a word, you will strive, by a faithful use of all the means the gospel provides, not only to grow in grace yourselves, but to bring all men to the knowledge and freedom of the truth as it is in Jesus.

We have here sought to place before you a simple, plain sketch of what we deem essential in Christian faith and life. We first place before you Christ, the divine ideal of excellence. Far above and beyond you rises the Sun of Righteousness, with healing in his wings, clothed with light and glory. How are you to reach him, how ascend to the serene realm where his

presence makes eternal day, and you will be forever blessed in him?

You must set out with fidelity to your primary, religious convictions. You must be true to your own hearts, to your natural sense of duty. Then receive the light that dawns upon your souls in Revelation, and walk in that light. Open your hearts to receive the Holy Spirit. Keep your eyes turned upward in prayer. Turn them not away from the throne of God for a single moment. Wait continually upon him in your closets, in his sanctuary, and in his church.

In closing this chapter on religion, permit us affectionately to urge upon you the supreme importance of the early consecration of your hearts and lives to the love and service of God. The preparation of this little volume has been emphatically a labor of love. We have felt that we were addressing those, chiefly, with whom we enjoy a personal and highly prized friendship, those in whose homes



we have visited, who have given us many tokens of their good will, and who have often listened to our voice in the house of God. Were these to be our last words of admonition and counsel to you, we would close them by urging upon you this early, personal consecration of yourselves to God. Remember now your Creator, in the days of your youth, while the evil days come not, and the years draw nigh when you shall say, "I have no pleasure in them." Your Heavenly Father calls you, saying, "Give me thine heart." The Savior calls and promises, "Come unto me and you shall find rest unto your souls." The voice from heaven proclaims "They that seek me early shall find me." You will never know true happiness. You will never enjoy, or do the good God requires of you. You will never pay the debt of love you owe to your Maker and your Savior, until you make a full surrender of all your affections to them. Delays are dangerous. If in youth you live carelessly and irreligiously,

you will probably go on in this way to the end of life, deprived of all its sweetest joys, and draining its bitterest dregs. At the last this course ends in sorrow, closes in darkness. Only through penal fires, through regrets, tears and anguish of soul, can the hardened, worldly mind find its way back to God, after years of thoughtlessness and sin. The gospel reveals no Savior for sinners who saves without "repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ." But this wretchedness you may now avoid by giving your young hearts to Christ before they are corrupted and blinded by sin. Deny yourselves, take up your cross and follow him, and life's way shall be strewn with the flowers of paradise. He will drain for you each bitter cup, present to your lips, in each hour of fainting, the waters of life, uphold and comfort you in death, and finally, at the end of the Pathway from Youth to Heaven, receive you into the kingdom of immortal glory.

## VII.

### HEAVEN.

**S**PENCER tells the story of a Christian young man who being led forth to die for his faith, met his mother upon the way. But she showed no signs of wild and excessive grief. Carrying herself like an heroic, Christian woman, she cried to him, saying, "Son! my son, I say, remember *Life Eternal*; look up to *Heaven*, lift up thine eye to Him who reigneth there; life is not taken from thee, but exchanged for a better." These words of his mother so animated the young man that he went willingly to execution, laid his head upon the block as calmly as he once laid it to repose upon his mother's bosom, and in a moment awake amid the bright glories of heaven.

We cannot close this little volume of

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counsel and encouragement for the young without repeating, and seeking to impress upon their minds the words of this heroic mother, "Remember, Life Eternal; look up to Heaven." In all the experiences of your lives, never lose sight of the fact that you are immortal beings.

This thought has been implied in all the preceding chapters, especially the last. But we desire to leave upon your minds a distinct impression of the sublime truth that you have begun an endless life, that your Creator in giving you being, made you the heirs of immortality. No life is strong and vigorous that is not nourished by a consciousness of this truth. Doubtless a deep, religious experience, such as is described in the preceding chapter, ever develops in the soul the faith and hope of endless life. The apostle says that the Holy Spirit, shed abroad in the hearts of believers, is the "*earnest*" of their inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession. But if the renewed heart is the only satisfactory

evidence of our immortality, it is no less true that the *knowledge* of the *fact* of our immortality is indispensable to a full realization of the power of religion. The inspired writers do not always present this hope of heaven simply as an element of religious experience. They frequently give it prominence, as a great truth, upon which the soul must feed, if it becomes strong in faith and love. They often dwell upon it with rapture, as an important agency to comfort and console, as well as to quicken and strengthen us. The Savior found that this alone, would comfort his disciples when he was about to leave them, and therefore said to them, "I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." He taught them of the resurrection, in which men die no more, and are equal unto the angels. At another time, the Apostle says, "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building

of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Nearly the whole of the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians is devoted to a consideration of this theme.

The fact of man's immortality stands out conspicuously upon the inspired page. It is inwoven with all the interests of human life. It is held up to our view to lure us from the way of evil and to encourage us in the practice of virtue. It would not thus be wrought into all the doctrines, precepts, agencies and results of the gospel, if it were not indispensable to the growth and perfection of the Christian character. It is *the* element that gives value to the human soul and dignity to human character. It is this that elevates man above the brute. A deep consciousness of our own immortality is a fundamental condition of success in our efforts to establish a noble character.

Says an old writer, "I wish there be not, among some, such a light and poor esteem of heaven, as makes them more to seek after assurance of heaven only in the idea of it,

as a thing to come, than after heaven itself; which indeed we can never well be assured of until we find it rising up within ourselves, and glorifying our own souls. When true assurance comes, heaven itself will appear upon the horizon of our souls, like a morning light, chasing away all our dark and gloomy doubtings before it. We shall not need then to light up candles to seek for it in corners; no, it will display its own lustre and brightness so before us, that we may see it in its own light, and ourselves the true possessors of it."

The young should early bring themselves to realize that they are immortal *now*, that they *now* have in their own souls the germs of endless life which, under God, is exclusively their own. Remember, young reader, that you have a separate life, a personal identity which will never vanish into nothingness, or fade into unconscious existence, or be lost in the life of other beings. And if you follow out this thought to its legitimate conclusion, it will teach you that

life is not a shadow or a vision, but a reality, that it brings you a work to do, a mission to fulfill, and assigns you a place to occupy both in time and in eternity. We know of no opinion more degrading in its influence upon character than that life is of little worth, a transient, meteoric phenomenon, with no abiding significance. Convince a man that his life may be put out like the blaze of a candle, by a breath of air or the stroke of a hand; that thought and affection, aspiration, hope, virtue and vice are only illusions that pertain to this world and will all vanish forever at the grave, and what has he more to live for than the brute? If this is true, *he is* a brute. He has only earthly parts, and fidelity to his nature requires that he shall live solely for earthly things.

It has been said that attaching so much sacredness to human life fosters pride and self-conceit, that men are prone to think too highly of themselves, and that instead of magnifying the worth of life, we should endeavor to make men feel how frail they are.



The Scriptures affirm, it is said, that "life is a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." This is indeed true of our earthly life, but our intellectual and spiritual life is something more than a vapor, it will never "vanish away."

"Dust thou art, to dust returnest.

Was not spoken of the *soul*."

We cannot admit, that regarding life as a mere earthly, perishable treasure would make us think more humbly of ourselves. We cannot perceive that the gross, corruptible nature of earthly things diminishes our love of them. Men cling to "filthy lucre," and often value it higher than honor, truth, virtue or even life itself, though they know it is "of the earth earthy." Nor can we believe they would be less proud, selfish and gross if they were convinced that they are mere animals, and to have no existence beyond this world. The intellectual and spiritual attributes of our nature, never awakened into vigorous life until they were moved by a consciousness of their immortality. Men

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were gross and sensual until they perceived in themselves divine qualities that time and sense can neither satisfy or destroy.

Pride, selfishness and grossness come not from perceiving immortal dignity and worth in our endowments, but from forgetting what we are by nature, and placing the highest value upon the accidents, the mere circumstances of life,—the beauty of our person, it may be, the richness of our attire, the splendor of our dwellings, or the greatness of our possessions. But when we look within and venerate the deathless faculties and powers which God has given us all alike, we are humbled. We stand in awe at the shrine of our own being. We realize that our lives are sacred, not for anything we have done, or attained, but for their own intrinsic value.

This thought of the infinite possibilities of an immortal soul ought to move us to the lowest depth of our being. Remember, my young readers, that your souls came from God and share in his eternity. They

are rays from the Infinite Sun, sparks from the Infinite Flame. In vain you strive to count the years and cycles of your being. Put down your figures in a line until they reach across the page. What are they in comparison with immortality? Lengthen out the line, using only the highest numbers, until it extends across the room, the field, the State, the continent, the globe. Now enumerate this line of figures, clasping the earth, and tell, if you can, what it stands for. And yet the number is not equal to the small hours of the morning of that eternity through which your souls are to exist. If you please, you may carry on this work of estimating, encircling the globe with your lines of figures, running them in all conceivable directions, until its surface becomes one vast network of digits, and they would all utterly fail to give you an idea of immortality. Wind them round again and again, one upon another, as you would the thread around a ball, until the earth becomes as large as all the planets com-

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bined in one, and even this inconceivable number no more expresses the idea of immortality than the smallest unit. This estimate seems imaginative, but if we are believers in the soul's immortality, we must admit that so far from exaggeration, it falls infinitely short of the idea.

And we appeal to you, young readers, is it not a startling thought that every one of you has begun this immortal life? You are launched upon the shoreless ocean of conscious existence. And what are the influences of this sublime truth upon your conduct and character? As it applies to your own private experiences, does it not teach you a lesson of humility, self-control, and personal purity? Does it not reveal the criminality of your giving up such powers to be driven before the tempest of unhallowed passion? O, it is an awful deed for men to give the divine, the immortal life which God has bestowed upon them into the possession of vile purposes, wicked principles, and vile prac-

tices; to let it sink down into ignorance, grossness, and folly.

In its application to your social relations, this doctrine of immortality teaches you to think of others as you think of yourselves, for we all have a common nature. It is its office to imbue the soul with an humble consciousness of the worth, beauty and glory of human nature. If it is immortal, it is too sacred to be perverted or debased. If men were conscious of their immortality they would not so often treat each other like brutes. If they realized that the relations and affections which bind them together here, will continue forever, they would not so often trample them in the dust. They would not sever the ties that bind them to society, retire from the social walks of life and feed on contempt for man. Nor, on the other hand, should we find so many, who throw their lives away upon the current of society, and being lost in it as drops of water are lost in the stream. Let a

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person be deeply sensible of the infinite possibilities of the human soul and he cannot abuse it. He realizes how sublime a work it is, and how noble the task of enlightening and sanctifying it. Both holiness and sin have their root in the fact of man's immortality. All our best efforts to purify and enlighten the soul derive their importance from its immortality. And all our crimes against it are magnified by being perpetrated against a sacred, deathless life.

We, therefore, urge the young to "remember Life Eternal," to "look up to Heaven" as they press on through life. If you study, remember you are educating immortal faculties. If you associate with your fellow-beings, remember that you are dealing with deathless spirits which will feel the effects of your treatment, your example, your words, your hatred or your love, forever. Remember, that every influence you send out into society will sweep on, a blessing or a curse, to countless

immortal souls. You know not where it will pause, for the affections, the moral convictions, the spiritual aspirations, all endowments that bind the race in one, common life, are immortal. Seek to impress this truth upon your minds by everything you learn and everything you do. Make all your experiences a work of personal growth. Do not live as the miser labors, to amass a great amount of material treasure around you. You have all the elements of true worth and happiness within you. Unfold those elements as the flowers unfold in beauty by drinking in the showers and absorbing the properties of the soil in which they grow. Make your souls central points which attract unto themselves all wisdom and virtue. Realize that your Creator has endowed you with gifts which make you worthy of the ministries of God himself; of his Son, who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for you; of angels, who rejoice over your penitence and vic-

tories amid the temptations and struggles of life; and of all the lower orders of creation, which have been given for the service of man.

The immortal soul is a centre of interest from every point of the universe, and if you are conscious of the indissoluble relation subsisting between you and all other beings, it cannot fail to exalt your estimate of human life and destiny. It seems to us, that this consciousness of our present relation to God and heaven is the foundation of all rational and spiritual improvement, that it should be the criterion by which we judge of men. An education or course of treatment adapted to any other view of man must contain serious defects, being limited and partial.

There is another direction in which this fact of your immortality connects itself with your estimate of life. It renders human life sacred and inviolable. It is God's life. He gave it. He sustains it. He has a work for it to do. And he only knows when its mission on earth is done. When



he is ready to take it back to himself, he has the power, and he alone has the right to call it hence. He only knows when it is prepared to go. Now, it is only from the standpoint of man's immortality that you will ever be able to perceive the sacredness of life. Why has humanity ever been subject to so many desecrations? Why has it been trampled upon and degraded and destroyed? When we dig down to the root of this evil, we find it is an unconsciousness of the divine, immortal soul within man. He has been seen only in his earthly form; only as a worm of the dust, often loathsome and venomous. And if he is only this, he is indeed entitled to very little respect. If men are brutes, they should be treated as brutes. We tear the flower from its stem and strew its tinted leaves in the dust, and feel that we have done no wrong. We bind the patient beast, and compel it to toil for us, or slaughter it for our food, and conscience makes no protest. These objects are of the earth;

they have no moral, spiritual and immortal qualities; they lack the elements of virtue, and progress, and, therefore, have not the power to awaken our reverence. But man has these qualities, and in these is the difference between him and the brute. He has moral and spiritual life that is to endure forever, and this challenges our reverence and inspires our love.

We have a deep and growing conviction that the great social evils of our time, such as violence, intemperance, licentiousness and oppression will never cease until this truth of man's immortality enters more fully into the life of the world as a controlling force. Nothing will lead you, my young friends, to love your fellow-men, and make you willing to sacrifice for their good, but the ever-present, active conviction that you are bound to them by ties that will hold through eternity. Nothing else will give you correct views of the wants of society, and of the proper instrumentalities for its relief.

We have dwelt thus at length upon the moral influences on your characters, of this doctrine of immortality, because they are fundamental. They are constantly operative in all the experiences of life.

We wish now, to lead you to consider the power of this truth to bless the life, when cherished as a hope and consolation. It not only dignifies and consecrates life as it is, but it points onward to its glorious destiny. It teaches us that life is sacred, not only for its latent qualities, but for what it is to be, for its power to unfold, by the aid of divine grace, into a life of holiness and happiness.

If this life were all there is to man, we could hope for him nothing better than he attains here. But if eternity is before him, vast are his opportunities for improvement and enjoyment. Heaven is a glorious ideal which the young should early set before their eyes, and always keep it there as they go on through life. They want a guiding star to lead them, a bright light

shining beyond the shores of time, out in the boundless ocean of eternity. This hope for life beyond the grave, life purer, happier, and unfading, springs up naturally in the soul. The desire for heaven is a natural desire. It comprehends both our love of life and our love of happiness. "What has been the great, and what is now one of the strongest and most influential powers or motives in the human heart? A desire to find some better place, some lovelier spot than we now have. For what does the tradesman toil? For what does the physician practice? For what does man hope at the decline and close of life? Some sheltered nook, some quiet spot, where, if he cannot have a rest that will never be moved, he may have, at least, a foretaste, and a foreshadow of it." And when we reach the most favorable, earthly condition, how soon do we begin to think of leaving it? "Here we have no continuing city, and we strain our eyes to look beyond the river for "the city which

hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

We are always homeless while in the body. The uncertainty of life and all earthly blessings takes away the feeling of perfect security which the word home implies. Yet we all long for this sense of security, and nothing this side of heaven satisfies us. Says Dr. Guthrie, "Home! oh, how sweet is that word. What beautiful and tender associations cluster around it; compared with it, house, mansion, palace, are cold, heartless terms. But home! that word quickens the pulse, warms the heart, stirs the soul to its depths, makes age feel young again, rouses apathy into energy, sustains the sailor in his midnight watch, inspires the soldier with courage on the field of battle, and imparts patient endurance to the worn-down sons of toil. The thought of it has proved a seven-fold shield of virtue, the very name of it has been a spell to call back the wanderer from the path of vice, and far away where myrtles bloom and palm trees

wave, and the ocean sleeps upon coral strands, to the exile's fond fancy, it clothes the naked rock or stormy shore, or barren moor, or wild, highland mountain, with charms he weeps to think of, and longs once more to see." Grace sanctifies these lovely affections, and imparts a sacredness to the homes of earth, by making them types of heaven. As a home, the believer delight to think of it. Thus, when lately bending over a dying saint, and expressing my sorrow to see him lie so low, with the radiant countenance rather of one, who had just left heaven, than of one about to enter it, he raised and clasped his hands, and exclaimed in ecstasy, "*I am going home!*"

" O gentle heaven !

Art thou indeed the home.—the happy shore,  
Where creatures wearied of this earth are driven,—  
Where hate is not,—where envy cannot soar,  
And nought save unimaginable love,  
And tenderest Peace,—a white and winged dove,—  
And beauty and perennial bloom are seen.

And ange's breathing in Elysian air.

Divinest music, and young shapes more fair

Then Houries pacing soft through pathways ever green?"

We believe this longing for heaven as our final rest, as the fulfillment of our good desires, in a word, as our everlasting *home*, rises up, at times, in every heart. And the more of its love and purity we have in our souls, the clearer will be our view of the life to come. We may live, indeed, we *should* live very near the angel world. "We are apt to speak of this world and another as though they were distinct and far apart. In reality they are close together; one link binds them together. Do we require something that is separated by ticks of time? Do we think that the other world is another country without barriers and physical peculiarities? Or do we think of it as something deeper than this,—something far more significant and substantial than this? Do we think of the next world as something that comes after this in place and sense? If we think of it as we should,

it only differs from this world in quality and essence. In fact we are in both worlds now. We are ascending and descending on Jacob's ladder continually. Sometimes we perform the grandest achievements and at the same time go down to the meanest lowliness. We should have in the heart the ascending and descending angels. We are, in fact, denizens of both worlds. As Paul says, first there is the natural and after that the spiritual; the natural comes first, and then the spiritual,—often too faintly recognized. Let us know that we are really, essentially in heaven now, that the spiritual world is here and hereafter, now and forever. In whatever place we go, the Lord is in that place, and we may mingle and blend with that divine and celestial life now and always."

You cannot fail, my young readers, to perceive how elevating and purifying this consciousness of the spiritual life must be upon all your feelings and conduct. To live in daily communion with God, Christ and angels; to join as it were, in the songs of



praise, to worship with the redeemed around the Throne, lifts the soul above the power of earthly temptations. You may enjoy this help and blessedness if you will open your hearts to receive them. ' You may constantly realize that you are in the society and fellowship of all pure and loving souls, both in heaven and in earth; that you are joined with them in spirit and life, and that being of their company, you are in a blessed degree cut off from the fellowship of evil doers. They will lose their influence over you. Their power to tempt and grieve you will be lost, while being of the company of angels and all good beings, you will easily fall in with the tenor of their lives. We naturally and unavoidably drink in the spirit of the society in which we move. If you live with so lively a consciousness of the heavenly world as to dwell in its society, your lives will be heavenly.

Thoughts of heaven will greatly aid you to come into its fellowship. You will find strength and inspiration in frequent contem-

plation of its blessedness. We are told that the prophet Daniel opened his window towards Jerusalem and prayed towards it three times a day, though he was far from it, a captive, in a strange land. \* So should you keep your hearts open towards the heavenly Jerusalem. In seasons of meditation and prayer you may commune with the pure and loving spirits in heaven until you feel to be one of their company, engaged in the sublime service which is there carried on, drinking at the "fountain-fullness" of joy which is there ever flowing forth, surrounded by the scenes and the society and the fellowship of the place, and above all in the abiding presence of the Lamb as he stands in the midst of the throne. All the joys of earth are but a dream, compared with the blessedness our souls may know in thus communing with heaven.

There may be a few,—we think only a few among the young,—who are in danger of dwelling too exclusively on the future life. They may permit the brightness and

blessedness of heaven to overshadow and darken their earthly life. You should not, young readers, contemplate the light and glory of heaven in contrast with earthly experiences. You should strive to carry the spirit and blessedness of heaven into all the enjoyments and sorrows of life. Your thoughts of heaven should be to your lives what drinking at a refreshing fountain is to your bodies amid the dust and toil and weariness of earth. You should go from them animated, refreshed and strengthened. When you consider its activity, its overflowing life of thought and progress and praise, be inspired to go on in that life here. Be quickened to present activity. Make this life as much like the heavenly life as you can. When you contemplate its freedom, the complete deliverance of redeemed souls from darkness, sin, sorrow and death, the free exercise of all their powers, their complete consecration to the love and service of God, let this inspire you to maintain spiritual freedom now, to merge your wills so

completely in the will of God that you will feel your strongest desires satisfied in doing his pleasure. When your thoughts are directed to the society of heaven, to the wise and the good, the great and the pure, the loving and the rejoicing ones assembled there, O, let your communion with them lead you to seek the society of those on earth who most resemble them. If you are in fellowship with angels, there will be nothing in the society of the vicious to attract you.

Each one of you, will be brought, sooner or later, to feel the need of this spiritual union with heaven. There are seasons of disappointment, sickness, bereavement and other afflictions in every life, when nothing but a "hope full of immortality" can sustain you. O, then, when earthly enjoyments, like faded flowers, lose their bright tints, and lie trodden in the dust, how sweet to think of treasures and friendships and perpetual delights in the land of the immortals. You need not be cut off from them here. They are your's now, and if you will but avail

yourselves of their ministries they will strengthen, cheer and comfort you when you are in trouble. In times of bereavement, the thought that the dear ones who have vanished from your sight, have risen into the nearer presence of God, that they are with the Savior and holy angels, is soothing to the sorrowing mind. Saints in heaven, says Dr. Beaumont, are perfectly happy, because perfectly holy. *Here*, they taste of the streams that flow from the infinite fulness of their Father and their God; *there* they will have to come to the Fountain itself. *Here* they receive clusters of grapes from the better Canaan; *there* they will have full and free access to the tree of life that is in the paradise of God."

" Brief life is *here* our portion ;

Brief sorrow, short-lived care ;

The life that knows no ending.

The tearless life is *there*.

Oh, happy retribution !

Short toil, eternal rest ;

For mortals and for sinners.

A mansion with the blest !

That we should look,—poor wanderers,—

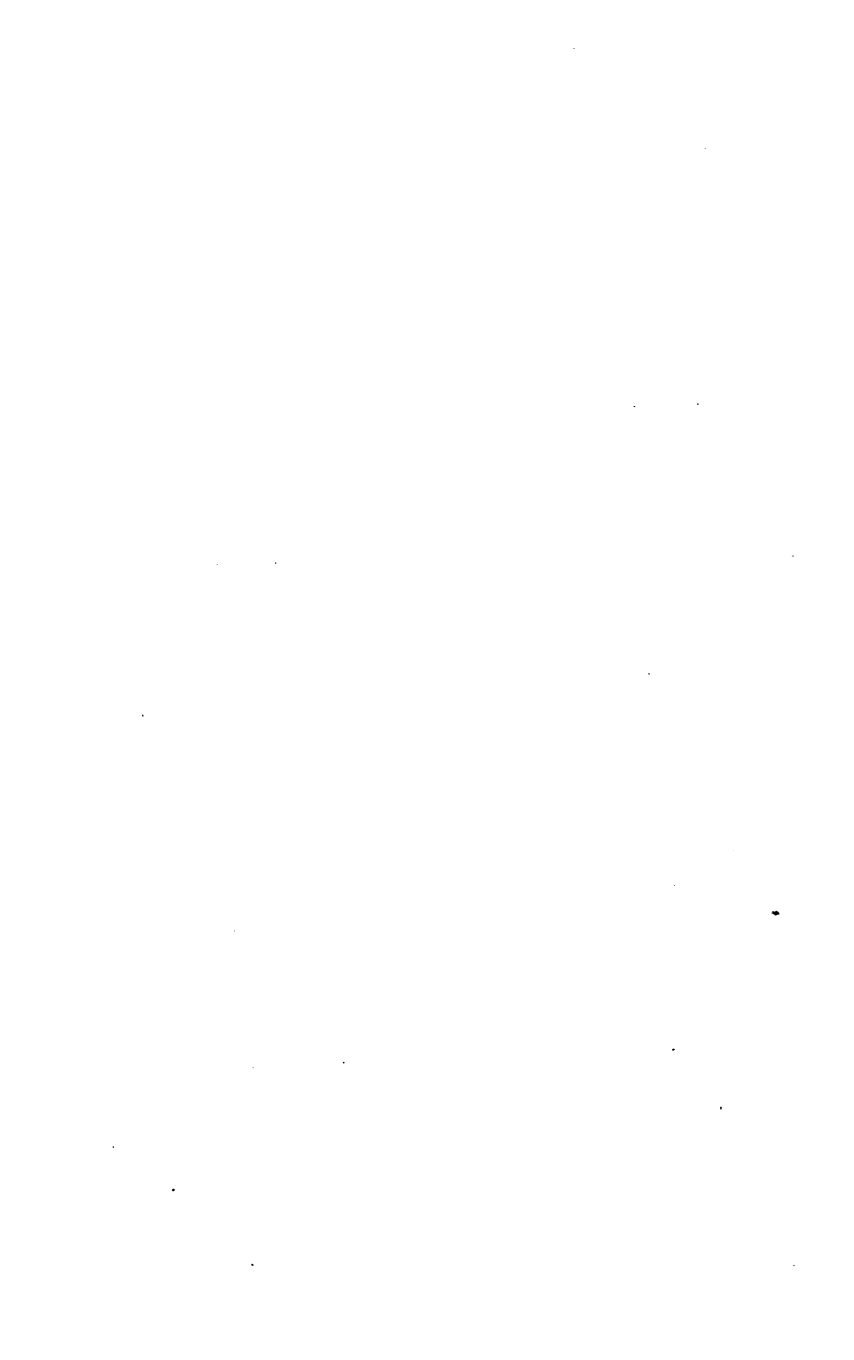
To have our homes on high !  
That worms should seek for dwellings  
Beyond the starry sky !  
To all, one happy guerdon  
Of one ce'estial grace ;  
For all, for all who mourn their fall  
Is one, eternal place ;  
And martyrdom hath roses  
Upon that heaven'y ground ;  
And white and virgin lilies  
For virgin souls abound.  
There grief is turned to pleasure ;  
Such pleasure as below,  
No human voice can utter,  
No human heart can know ;  
And after fleshly scandal,  
And after this world's night,  
And after storm and whirlwind,  
Is calm, and joy, and light,  
And there is David's fountain,  
And life in fullest glow !  
And there the light is golden,  
And milk and honey flow !  
There Jesus shall embrace us,  
There Jesus be embraced ;  
That spirit's food and sunshine,  
Whence earthly love is chased."

ST. BERNARD.

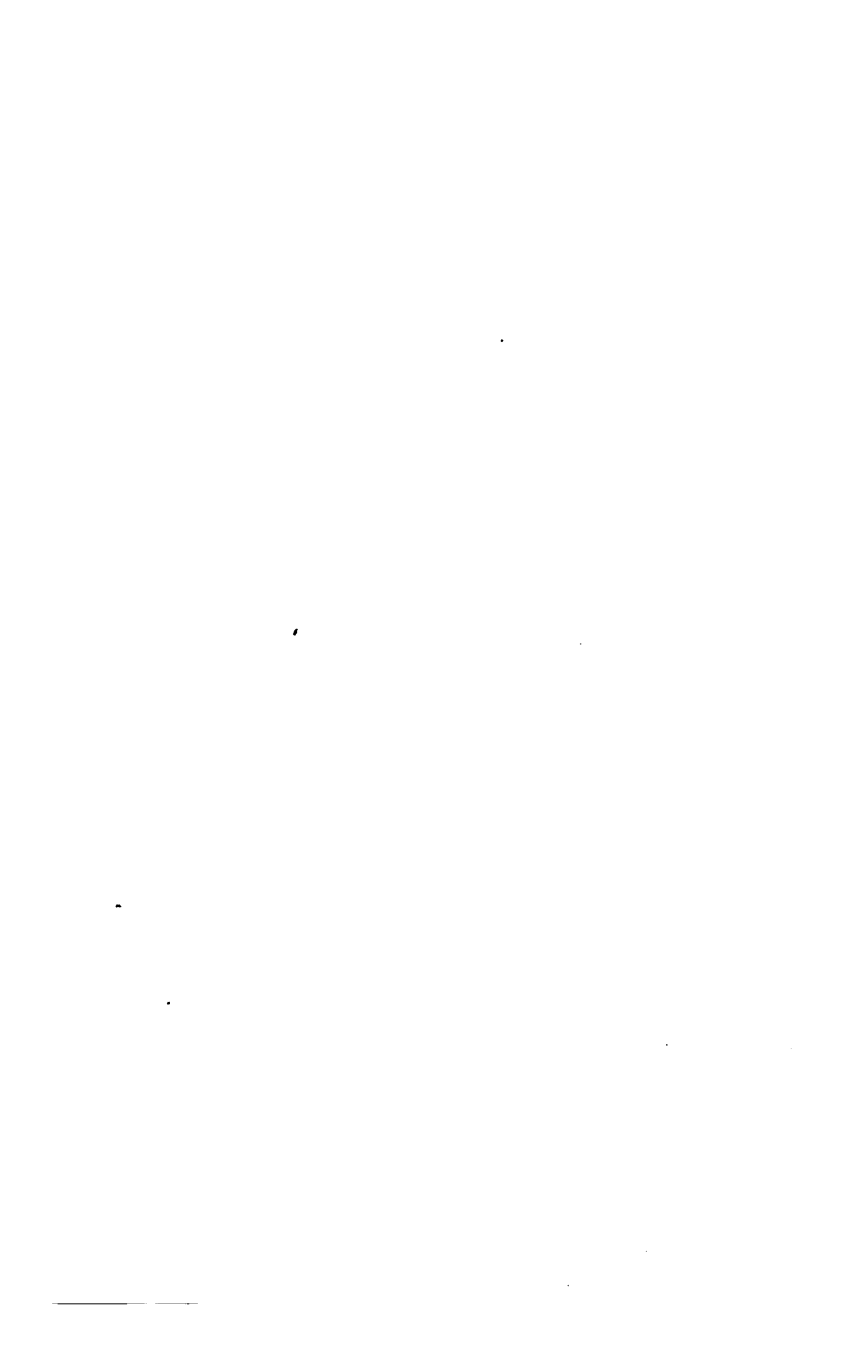
And this bright prospect will never fade from your view, but grow brighter as you near and enter it. The blessedness and glory of heaven are fadeless realities. They are unending. All earthly enjoyments pass away,—are succeeded by seasons of darkness and sorrow. O, there is so much to *satisfy* the soul in this prospect of *endless* life, and ever increasing blessedness.

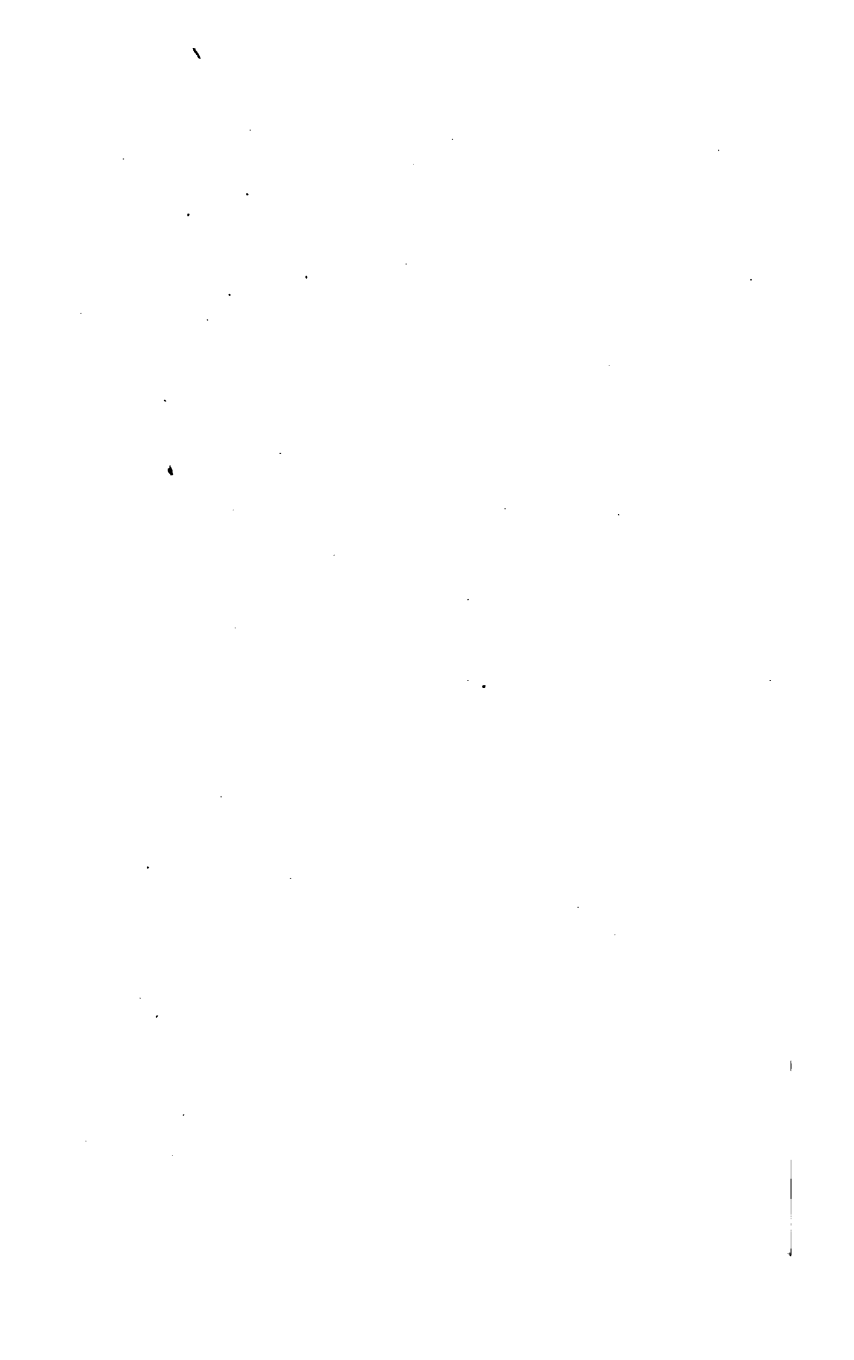
“ There’s no last tune in’ heaven ; the angels pour  
A still new song though chanted evermore ;  
There’s no night, following on their day-light hours.  
No fading time for amaranthine flowers ;  
No change, no death, no harp that lies unstrung.  
No vacant place, those hallowed h-l’s among.”

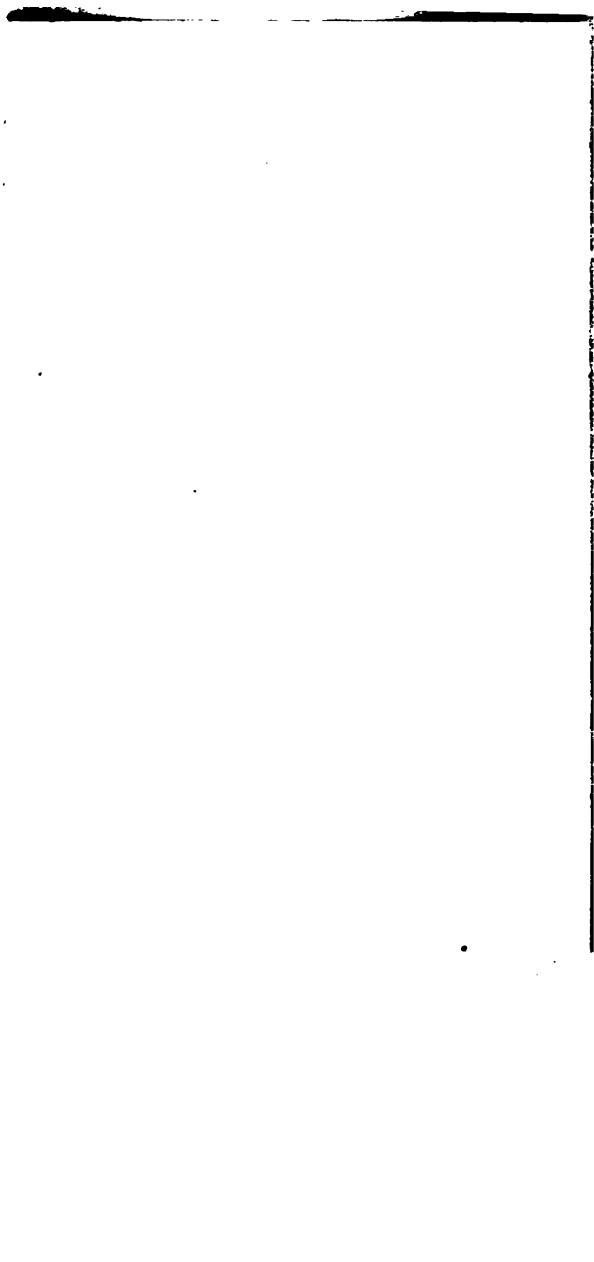
My dear young friends, press on in the Christian life. You will never get through. An eternity of life and action are before you. Be pure, be thoughtful, be humble, be earnest, be loving and devout, “ Remember life eternal ; look up to heaven, lift up your eyes to Him who reigneth there.”













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